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Inheritance:
Kinship and the Performance of Sudanese Identities

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Inheritance:
Kinship and the Performance of Sudanese Identities

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2007

Dedication

To my kin: fictive and real

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my committee members deserve recognition for all the myriad forms of support they provided during the preparation of this dissertation. My two co-Chairs, Nina Berman and Elizabeth Richmond-Garza provided steady support, complemented each other's strengths, and exceeded their professional duties on numerous occasions. Nina Berman was there in the beginning and encouraged me to pursue my research on Kwoto in Sudan. During seminars, office hours, and informal conversations, Nina has always been a model of committed, passionate, responsible scholarship, and I benefited from our shared commitment to interdisciplinary research. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza has known me since my first year in the Program of Comparative Literature, which she now so ably directs. Under her auspices, the Program has flourished and I look forward to seeing where she takes it in coming years. Elizabeth calmly guided me through some of the obstacles I encountered, always asked pointed and pertinent questions about the drafts I submitted, and remained optimistic. For that, I thank her. I thank my other committee members, Hal Wylie, Toyin Falola and César Salgado, for their patience and continuing dialogue on the project. They made the defense a pleasurable experience, even as they offered astute critiques. Hal Wylie has been a friend, but transformed into a formidable critic when needed and challenged me to challenge myself. Toyin Falola led by example; it appears the "sun never sets" on him,

as he continues to publish, host conferences, mentor and win teaching awards and initiate new projects. Toyin and César Salgado drew from their own archives and horizons when commenting on my project; their contributions not only enriched my own thinking but attested to the value of comparative work.

I would also like to acknowledge the ready assistance I received from diverse members of the staff at the University of Texas at Austin over many years. UT's status as one of the largest universities in the United States may be a source of pride (especially among Texans), but its size is daunting to new graduate students, and ensures that the simplest of tasks may take hours. Among those who pruned the pathways and made my peregrinations smoother are those who worked for the Program in Comparative Literature, including Andrea Sindt; those who worked for the Undergraduate Writing Center, including Scott Blackwood; those who worked in the Graduate School, including Dorothy Williams, Andrea St. Lawrence and Lynn Margason; and those who staffed the Cashier's Office. I appreciate the professionalism, courtesy and kindness of all of the staff members with whom I came into contact.

Parts of the dissertation were written while I was employed at Southwestern University, and I owe the Department of English thanks for such a collegial and supportive atmosphere while I was completing my degree. A special thanks goes out to Dr. Timothy Robinson for stimulating and *engaged* discussions on innumerable topics, and for his quiet certainty that I would finish. What I perceived as Tim's optimism regarding the retention and utility of kinship structures ultimately served as a corrective to my own tendencies toward practical and theoretical pessimism. Other colleagues, in both the real and virtual worlds, facilitated an environment conducive to my development as a teacher-scholar and provided me with glimpses of an ideal academy. Although I will not name them all here, I appreciate the connections I have forged with colleagues in the

Comparative Literature program, American Comparative Literature Association, Sudan Studies Association, African Literature Association, among others. I reserve a special thank you to Jane Park for her long-term friendship, inspirational example in finishing her degree and executing the responsibilities of the tenure-track with grace and aplomb. I look forward to continuing exchanges with all these friends and colleagues, even across oceans. I must also recognize the invaluable contributions of the members of the Kwoto Cultural Center to this project. Derik Uya Alfred, Hanan Amin, Edward Ladu Terso, Elfatih Maluk Atem, Dominic Gregory, Arkangelo Mako, Omjima Philip, Beej Louis Thauq Kaul, Anita Patris, Uncle Louis among others too numerous to mention, provided me with a hearty welcome upon my arrival in Khartoum and patiently responded to my incessant questions.

Although I do not get to see them regularly, my parents have been constant companions in my intellectual journey. Each modeled curiosity and remained steadfast in their support for my research, even when it took me to Sudan in 2002. My father accompanied me during my "college search" so long ago and instilled in me an appreciation for education. Deprived of the chance to attain academic degrees, both my parents have sacrificed so that I may achieve my goal. I cannot adequately repay them, and from them I have learned something of kinship as a "system of support." My brother has been a cheerleader, commending me for my tenacity and reminding me that the goal was worth it.

Inheritance:
Kinship and the Performance of Sudanese Identities

Publication No._____

Rebecca Lorins, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2007

Supervisors: Elizabeth Richmond-Garza and Nina Berman

In this project, I treat Sudan as an exemplary case study for the examination of kinship and agency in contexts of layered imperialisms. I juxtapose a contemporary postcolonial novel by Tayeb Salih (*Mawsim al-hijra ila shamal / Season of Migration to the North (1966/69)*), and four contemporary unpublished plays (1994 – 2002) by the Kwoto Cultural Center in Khartoum, Sudan, and ask how the texts, the performance traditions, and their creators appropriate kinship as a vehicle to discuss, uphold and/or challenge the reproduction of economic, social and political values and the dominant ideologies that continue to define a "North" and "South" as gendered geographies in contemporary Sudan. Rather than simply reiterate the transformative importance of the 19th century British colonial period in Sudan, I seek to build on the insights of previous scholarship by bringing to the fore the ways the vestiges and shadows of overlapping and layered imperialisms condition the architecture of the texts audiences read and witness today. I argue that within these multiple contexts, kinship is an elastic concept, one that

is not static, but constantly made, remade, lived in and negotiated over the boundaries of temporalities and geographies. I argue that the texts under investigation do not force Sudan to cohere as "one nation" but rather attest to this complex present both by mirroring Sudan's diverse composition and by inviting new ways of reading and relating that help to create new configurations and new social orders that compete with "nation" as a modality of community.

In the Introduction, I set out an historical framework sensitive to layered imperialisms and examine how the reconsolidation and resilience of kinship ties has impacted authority and agency. In Chapter One, "The Kinlessness of Mustafa Sa'eed: Parentage and the Migration North in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North,*" I suggest that Sudan's ethno-religious division into a geography of "North" and "South" is revealed through an analysis of Mustafa Sa'eed's "kinlessness" and the inextricability of that kinlessness from the reality of his parentage. My analysis suggests that this novel by a celebrated northern Sudanese author traces a submerged history of Sa'eed's parents: the Beja from the North and the slave from the South, and in this way explores the opposing ideologies of "freedom" and "servility." Chapter Two, "'*Summarizing the South':* Staging Kinship and Unity in Select Plays by The Kwoto Cultural Center," explores the "North"/ "South" divide from the perspective of displaced southerners living in the North of Sudan. This chapter moves to the realm of performance, from literacy to orality, and from the single author to the collective. After an introduction to the troupe and its context as well as the salient themes of the chapter, I discuss my methodology and fieldwork in Sudan, and then offer a selective overview of Sudanese performance traditions that are

relevant to a reading of Kwoto's theater. I then turn to an analysis of the plays, focusing on how each play engages kinship as both content and method in the context of relations among southerners and between southerners and those external to the community, including ancestors, northerners, Westerners, and aid workers.

By juxtaposing the literary and the performative, I seek to diversify the kinds of texts we consider and compare in our analysis of the postcolonial. Pairing a novel with performance texts brings into sharp relief the conditions of production and interpretation for each form, also reminding us of the historical context of a form's cultural ascendance. Additionally, the juxtaposition of unpublished manuscripts with an international novel destabilizes the boundary between "elite" and "low" cultures and arrives at a more accurate picture of the heterogeneity and multiplicity of the cultural marketplace in African societies than postcolonial scholarship has heretofore allowed. Finally, the juxtaposition of *Season* with Kwoto's unpublished manuscripts allows us to probe the resonances across regional, ethnic, and generic difference, and to examine how the "problem of the South" – or more broadly, the divisions between "North" and "South" in Sudan are negotiated and become visible in different cultural products. I argue in the chapters that follow that kinship becomes one vehicle these texts use to discuss transforming Sudanese identities and that, moreover, kinship as a heuristic moves beyond nation to pave the way for imagining multiple affiliations and communities.

Table of Contents

Introduction:

Kinship and Layered Imperialisms in Sudan

The short story "Government by Magic Spell" by Saida Hagi-Dirie Herzi, tells the tale of the appropriation and commercialization of tradition by urban elite men in contemporary Somalia. Halima, a village woman, falls ill and the *Wadaad* diagnoses her illness as the result of her possession by an infant *jinni*.[1] The elite of her clan, who occupy all of the prestigious positions in the capital city, persuade Halima that there is a causal relationship between her possession, viewed as a spiritual blessing, and the clan's welfare, and invite her and her family to move to the capital. Although her father declines an invitation to move to the city, he encourages Halima to move, and she swiftly relocates with her brother to the urban center in order to assist the state. Safely ensconced in her new government position, and surrounded by opulence, Halima orders the destruction of all independent wells, the centralization of all water sources and the construction of a huge slaughterhouse to be used for mass sacrifices, claiming that these orders come directly from her jinni. Her orders lead to the suffering of the civilian population, who are deprived of essentials such as food and water and are coerced into silence. With a complete monopoly over government and the means of production, Halima's clan prospers and many credit her for the clan's success. The story ends thusly: "The men of the clan continue to govern with the help of Halima's magic spell" (Herzi 99).

"Government by Magic Spell" opens a space for literary critics to consider kinship as a framework and a central conceptual category in the analysis of agency and identity-construction and performance in third world settings, like Somalia, characterized by layered imperialisms. In this introduction and the chapters that follow, I turn to Sudan, another example of an African-Islamic space shaped by layered imperialisms, and take up and extend the heuristic value of kinship by offering extended readings of select texts that reflect the complex pluralism of Sudan. I juxtapose a contemporary postcolonial novel by Tayeb Salih (*Mawsim al-hijra ila shamal / Season of Migration to the North (1966/69)*), and four contemporary unpublished plays (1994 – 2002) by the Kwoto Cultural Center in Khartoum, Sudan, and ask how the texts, the performance traditions, and their creators appropriate kinship as a vehicle to discuss, uphold and/or challenge the reproduction of economic, social and political values and the dominant ideologies that continue to define a "North" and "South" as gendered geographies in contemporary Sudan. Rather than simply reiterate the transformative importance of the 19th century British colonial period in Sudan, I seek to build on the insights of previous scholarship by bringing to the fore the ways the vestiges and shadows of overlapping and layered imperialisms condition the architecture of the texts audiences read and witness today. Shaped by precolonial dynasties, stateless societies, the early introduction of Islam and the Ottoman state before the arrival of Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, Sudan today continues to experience outside interventions in the form of global humanitarian efforts, economic investment and religious proselytizing. Within these multiple contexts, kinship is an elastic concept, one that is not static, but constantly made, remade, lived in

and negotiated over the boundaries of temporalities and geographies. I argue that the current context of reception for Sudanese texts and current events must take into account the memory of earlier imperialisms or risk interpretations that obsfucate and oversimplify. In fact, I suggest that the layered imperial context necessarily results in a fluid present where the boundaries of "nation" and "state" are continually contested. I argue that the texts under investigation do not force Sudan to cohere as "one nation" but rather attest to this complex present both by mirroring Sudan's diverse composition and by inviting new ways of reading and relating that help to create new configurations and new social orders.

In postcolonial spaces like Sudan and Somalia, faced with weak and failed states and economic strain, kinship is more than simply a network of relatives, however broadly defined; rather, kinship in these settings may be appropriated by individuals and groups to refer to ever-widening circles of affiliates and is "implicated in systems of care, responsibility and social security" (Palriwala and Risseeuw 17). As is clear in Herzi's story, though, kinship is also a structure that may be exploited by the socially and economically powerful members of a network. Following Palriwala and Risseeuw, I insist on kinship's duality; that is, I recognize kinship as a "system of support" as well as a "system of sanction," as a potential network of care as well as a potential source of control and oppression (16 – 17). A concept as flexible, dynamic and integral as kinship demands a holistic analysis and interdisciplinary approach that recognizes the fundamental interdependence between domains of study. To that end, I supplement my literary critical approach and attention to language with historical and anthropological

approaches that are better equipped to evaluate kinship as an evolving system that is local in practice and changes over time. These approaches ensure that systems of kinship are not viewed in isolation or limited to the domestic sphere, but rather are historically contextualized and recognized as in dialectical relationship with macroeconomic and political processes and structures.

Just as the academic study of kinship necessitates the crossing of boundaries between disciplines, the bonds of kinship, as illustrated in Herzi's story, regularly carry us across social spheres. Crossing over the threshold of the personal into the social, the home into the marketplace, and the spiritual into the political, the bonds of kinship invite us to reconsider the dynamic interrelationships between the private use of language and its social ramifications. The very title of Herzi's story, "Government by Magic Spell," signals the possibility of language as performative utterance, that is, the way language delivered in specific forms and contexts not only reflects but expresses and makes culture. In the case of Halima, it is not just any language that contains power and effects change in the world; rather, the power of her words derive much of their force from the fact that they are uttered within the space and time of the "magic spell." Halima's words conform to specific generic conventions, granting her unique agency that crosses over from the visible to the invisible realms and links the political to the spiritual. Halima's magic spell and possession as techniques of the self also point to Islamic practices as a context for the social and textual worlds I analyze in this case study. Scholars have long suggested how during processes of Islamization, the introduction of the textual sources of Islam, including the Qur'an and Hadith, influence and change customary arrangements

and cultural codes, bringing with them new frameworks for understanding language, for writing and reading, and also new ways of relating (see Adonis 35 – 53; Robinson 27 – 41). Islam does not supersede a focus on kinship but rather adapts its rhetoric and presents a fundamentally new framework for the exercise of relationships. Importantly, Halima's "magic spell" must also be understood within the parallel processes of the "africanization of Islam" (Robinson 42 – 59) and practices of Islam must be historically situated since their value and import will shift depending on the context. Commenting on the significance of *umma* within some Hausa communities in Northern Nigeria, Quinn writes: "An individual's umma may be identified in terms of birthplace; clan or family; language; country; region; district or city ward; religion; or race. Depending on circumstances, an individual may claim a primary identity defined in any of these dimensions" (38). Competing ideologies, loyalties and languages may conflict and co-exist in one person or in one text, and differently-situated readers and auditors will facilitate multiple interpretations of a text or performance. In the pages that follow, then, I pay attention not only to *what* is said in select texts, but to *how* it is said and situated, and what textual sources may be activated.

By linking kinship with the economic, political and spiritual domains, Herzi's story illustrates the dynamism and broad conceptual reach of kinship in postcolonial settings and the competing and overlapping contexts that animate a text. "Government" takes a village woman, Halima, as its narrative center, but presents her actions as occurring within and conditioned by networks of men: the traditional patriarchy of her father's village as well as the newly configured clanist patriarchy of her brother and the

urban elite. Refusing to marry, Halima moves to the capital with her brother, and so chooses to maintain her connection to her "clan" which Kapteijns defines as "a community of agnatically related men" ("Women" 213). Her choice and its repercussions for reproduction are emphasized both by the way her possession is inaugurated and by the identity of her jinni. Triggered by her accidental stepping on an infant, Halima's possession by the infant jinni may be read as resistant toward her prescribed role as biological reproducer. Yet, even as the possession is resistant, it is also highly reactionary, as it ties Halima to an infant permanently (94) and imaginatively redirects her reproductive role to the service of her own newly empowered clan who do not distribute resources equitably but instead hoard goods, services and profits among those recognized as related agnatically, and by blood. In precolonial Somali society, woman's role as mediator was institutionalized through the custom of exogamous marriage. The *xidid,* or marriage tie, was perceived as a significant alliance representing and facilitating the potential for cooperation and peace between clans (Samatar "Collapse" 109).[2] Furthermore, *xeer* (customary law) and Islam complemented xidid as social networks that served to offset the insularity of *tol,* or the agnatic system of blood ties and connections (Samatar "Collapse"). In "Government," Halima aligns herself with her patrilineal lineage, making her agnatic relatives – rather than affines – central to her self-definition.[3] Rather than pursue affinal ties, Halima shores up the boundaries of the clan and helps to consolidate its power as a self-sustaining and autonomous unit. By doing so, Halima foregrounds her role as "sister," rather than wife; she partakes in the power of the new patriarchal unit and confirms – rather than challenges – its authority

and legitimacy.[4] The mechanism of possession as it is embodied in the infant jinni and manipulated by the clan metaphorizes the incestuous underpinnings of the "Government" and its claims to power. To put it simply, Halima's "baby" belongs to her clan, and in suggesting such a scenario playing out in urban center, Herzi highlights the reversion to clannist identity and "blood ties" as a function of modernity rather than simply a return to tradition. By exploring the consequences of the detachment of tol from the parallel systems of xidid, xeer and Islam, "Government" serves as a cautionary tale of the perversion of kinship and new forms of kinlessness within capitalist modernity.

By making visible the sentimental and affective but also political ties that bind the rural and the urban, tradition and modernity, the spiritual leader and the secular official, and women and men, "Government" insists on the complexities involved in analyzing the circulation of power in a postcolonial setting. More specifically, gender identity and alliance in Herzi's story is not self-evident or predictable, but an area of contestation. "Government by Magic Spell" is by a woman author and features a woman at the center of the narrative, but Halima's perspective is not informed by a consciousness of gender difference; instead, Halima's perspective conforms to the needs of the patriarchies within which she operates. Halima reproduces her own clan's position; her role is significant insofar as she remains a viable avenue to economic prosperity and political power. Her words and deeds serve to buttress the hegemonic political and economic structures around her; her performance of tradition is co-opted and commodified by those in power and her gendered rituals, such as possession, confer legitimacy on the fierce and individualistic competition for state resources among men. Halima's gender identity is

subsumed and controlled by other factors; the most salient aspect of her identity becomes her communal identity as a member of the ruling clan elite.

Herzi's attention to the variable and contradictory uses of gender in postcolonial settings is a useful corrective to ahistorical and uncritical assumptions of gender essentialism and a potentially productive invitation to recognize and read alliances across gender difference. Taking "Government" as a caveat and an inspiration, I self-consciously approach the male-authored texts that are the focus of this dissertation as a female critic, but remain open to the ways they upset and question dominant ways of knowing. Like "Government" the texts I examine are produced under the conditions of autocratic government and patriarchal ideologies. However, where Halima unquestioningly supports the patriarchies in her midst and is therefore complicit in their rule, the male characters in the texts under analysis are situated ambivalently with respect to the hegemonic kinship and political structures and gendered expectations.

In *Consequences of Modernity,* Anthony Giddens posits kinship relations as the first of four "contexts of trust" in pre-modern settings. He describes kinship ties as "an organizing device for stabilizing social ties across time-space" (102). In her feminist analysis of Somali communal identity, Kapteijns identifies four main areas of social life structured by traditional kinship arrangements: "access to the factors of production, the division of labor, the exercise of power and political authority, and the moral values that explained and justified the status quo" ("Women" 214). Moreover, Kapteijns notes that the basic features of Somali pastoral society, "such as its social stratification according to age and gender and the forging of a communal identity and ideology phrased in terms of

kinship, are typical of many precapitalist, agrarian, nonstate societies" (Kapteijns "Women" 215, 217).[5] According to both Giddens and Kapteijns, then, kinship permeated every aspect of life in precolonial society, structuring and stabilizing relations between not only members of the "elementary family" but among members of the larger social units such as the extended family, the clan and the tribe.[6]

Giddens states outright that "kinship connections are often a focus of tension and conflict" (101). As Kapteijns alludes in her phrase "justifies the status quo" and Giddens importantly suggests in his discussion, kinship is neither "natural" nor permanent, but a contingent and unstable ordering of society that needs constant reinforcement. I argue in this dissertation that a central arena for the negotiation of kinship relations is the textual sphere and in the following pages, I examine the way the literary and performative space mediates multiple domains and facilitates the kinship of the audience.

Methodology

I have argued that a concept as flexible, dynamic and integral as kinship demands an integrated, holistic analysis and interdisciplinary approach that recognizes the fundamental interdependency between domains of study. To that end, I implement an interlinguistic, interdisciplinary, ethnographic approach that is equipped to handle kinship as a multifaceted category that spans the "real world" and the fictional text. I have already mentioned the importance of the duality of kinship as a system of support and a system of sanction as a framework for my analysis. Here, I would like to introduce a further duality as it plays out in my methodology for this dissertation: kinship as content and kinship as method.

Kinship as content refers simply to the fact that a main focus of my textual analyses, as will become clearer in the chapter summaries below, is the representation of changing kinship relations. I suggest that kinship serves as a useful framework in which to examine the shifting contests for power and influence among men, specifically intergenerational relationships between men and relationships between dominant and non-dominant or subaltern identities. I contend that the representations of these struggles become a way for the authors to grapple with their inheritance of a colonial patriarchy and its reproduction and transformation in the postcolonial period. The texts I examine are full of missing fathers, distant mothers, orphaned boys, lusty elders, adoptive siblings. Apparently "kinless" figures such as ex-slaves, street children and refugees emerge as ambivalent signs of modernity, charged with reinventing "tribal," regional, national and transnational identities and negotiating conflicting loyalties.

Kinship as method refers to the ways authors and texts employ the idiom and structure of kinship in their attempts to secure attachments to readers and audiences. In his work on Islam in Africa, David Robinson suggests the centrality of "genealogical attachment" in the creation and transformation of identities (49). Robinson writes that people appropriate key signifiers (including bodily practices, amulets, languages, as well as genealogies) in their quest to perform new identities. In this dissertation, I argue that genealogical invention is not only a source for content in the texts under investigation, but rather the production and reception of texts entail the continual recreation of kinship ties. In this sense, kinship as method implicates me as a reader of the texts under

investigation, a witness to the performances in Sudan, and as an author of this dissertation.

The first step in enacting kinship as method is living linguistically with a culture. Although this element of my research is most visible in the work I conducted with the Kwoto Cultural Center in Khartoum for Chapter Two, the preparation required for the textual analysis in Chapter One was analogous to "living linguistically" with Sudan. Besides approximately five years of Arabic study at the University of Texas at Austin, I pursued language training in Morocco in 1998 and the Middlebury Language School in 2000. As anyone who studies language and culture knows, the classroom is a necessary but not sufficient step in attaining a comprehensive understanding of the deeper strata of a culture. Sudan's peripheral status in the Arab world also meant that formal Arabic study alone would not equip me with knowledge of local meanings and usages and therefore I came to rely on informal exchanges, conversations and formal interviews with native informants of all stripes, including colleagues, friends and Kwoto members for the exegesis of textual problems.

The dual structure of the dissertation first and foremost reflects my decision to pair a novel with play texts. By pairing a well-known novel authored by a northern Sudanese with unpublished plays authored by southern Sudanese, I invoke a binary that I then try to undo by analyzing characters present in both works who, through their 'geneaology trouble' serve as vehicles for examining Sudan's North/South encounters. The binaristic structure of this work reflects many of the themes that emerge in the study of Sudan and also echoes a number of other binarisms regularly interrogated in

postcolonial studies, including the binaries of North/South; Western/non-Western; Canon/non-Canonical; Dominant/Subaltern. But just as I believe the texts in this dissertation complicate the North/South divide, I hope the structure I employ does not simply reify the border, but rather invites us to think about the fluidity of Sudan's present and of the conflicted histories and ideologies that connect, join, and bind the two geographies.

History

Any overview of social structures in Sudan must acknowledge the enormous variety of ethnolinguistic and religious groups. At 2.5 million square kilometers, Sudan is the largest territory in Africa, and geographically, historically and culturally straddles the Middle East and Africa ('Abd al Rahim 29; Mazrui "Multiple" 240). Social relations in Sudan have been affected by successive waves of Islamization, Christian proselytization and colonization as well as by economic migration and war in the contemporary period. Some of the changes include: the erosion and restructuring of traditional tribal structures during the *Turkiyya,* the Arabic term for the Ottoman period in Sudan (1820 – 1881) (Holt and Daly 71; Warburg *Islam* 7); strengthening of patriarchy under colonial and postcolonial regimes; continuing stratification of ethnicity during Anglo-Egyptian colonization (1898 – 1956); the destabilization of age-based hierarchies due to the penetration of the cash-economy, and the consolidation of a "North"/ "South" divide that became also symptomatic of ethno-religious divisions. In this section, I will briefly discuss the historical dimensions of these issues. I draw heavily on the work of historians

and anthropologists of Sudan and highlight shifting kinship structures as a nodal point for understanding changing Sudanese identities.

First, in a general sense, patriliny characterizes social organization in the modern Sudan, however, patriliny has been in constant conversation with matriliny and it is after the influx of great numbers of Arab settlers who reckoned descent patrilineally, that indigenous groups consolidated and codified this form of descent.[7] Patrilineal descent characterizes the majority of the Arabized, Islamized groups in northern Sudan, as well as many of the pastoralist and agriculturalist groups of the south of Sudan, including the Dinka, the largest single ethnic group in the nation-state and the Bari, a major agriculturalist group. One major difference between northern Sudanese and southern Sudanese groups is that the former have generally adopted the Arab custom of endogamous marriage to the first cousin (*bint 'amm*), whereas the latter have traditionally assumed exogamy (Beswick *Sudan's* 138; Huby 239). The pastoralist groups are segmented agnatically, with competition among men sometimes leading to the fission of a group (Beswick *Sudan's* 175 – 181, 190 – 191). As long as territory was bountiful, the division of groups could be accommodated, but with external predation from the north and land scarcity came centralization and new forms of stratification and internal conflict among the Dinka (Beswick *Sudan's* 191).

Endogamy among the Arabized groups tended to favor stability and the retention of wealth and resources within an extended family, a point I discuss further in Chapter One. A polygynous society, the Dinka equate the acquisition of numerous wives with status and wealth and recognized two methods of acquisition: the payment of bridewealth

or the act of raiding (Beswick *Sudan's* 137).[8] Favoring exogamy, both the Dinka and the Nuer used marriage as a means of ethnic expansion, incorporating "peripheral foreigners," and particularly foreign women; in this way, many precolonial pastoralist societies were characterized by some degree of flexibility with regards to ethnic identity and identification.[9] Like the Somali concept of *xidid* noted above, the Dinka and other Sudanese pastoralist groups viewed women as a link between two potentially warring groups. The role of the woman as mediator was further institutionalized through the recognition of the importance of the mother and maternal kin to the development of the child. Still, exogamous marriage patterns and the incorporation of foreign women posed the threat of disunity and fracturing, and this threat was off-set in Dinka society by cultural products such as songs, folktales and myths that presented the woman as "the enemy of family solidarity" and "breaker of family ties" and emphasized the role of the father as the symbol of family unity (Deng *Dinka and their Songs* 24). Moreover, the child's attachment to maternal kin was expected to come to end as the child reached maturity and solidified his/her loyalty to the agnatic lineage by moving physically to the *wut* and *gol,* the cattle camp and cattle hearth, which spatially organized agnatic descent groups (Deng *The Dinka* 49).

The traditional societies were stratified by gender and age, with elder married men among the Bari and Nuer, for example, controlling political and economic power in the ownership of land (Huby 239). The Dinka name for themselves, *Monyjiang,* "Man [or Husband] of Men" exemplifies the patriarchal structure of the society, and highlights the centrality of the father and agnatic lineage in sustaining customary procreative values

(Deng *The Dinka* 2, 164; Beswick *Sudan's* 138 – 140). A significant element of male socialization and community-building lay in the rituals a young man endured with his age-mates, including circumcision at age six and the extraction of the six front lower teeth at the age of ten (Deng *The Dinka* 66).[10] Furthermore, male youth in multiple pastoralist societies await initiation and its concomitant rituals with great eagerness, since before initiation, the youth are considered "boys" and are given the least valued jobs and excluded from such activities as singing (Deng *The Dinka* 69). To become a man, the youth go through a months-long initial ritual, learn dances, live in restricted villages with their lineages, and receive seven to ten deep, ordered marks across their foreheads.[11] Even after the initiation rituals are over, the young men must endure a beating delivered by the age-set above them, and only after they survive, are released from the status of initiate; each new man receives gifts of spears to honor his new designation (*The Dinka* 73). The eventual entry into marriage moderates the importance of the age-set in the man's life, but Deng argues that the age-set continues to play some role throughout a man's life, offering him alternatives and supplements to kinship ties. Significantly, Deng also argues that this supplement helps to sustain age and family stratification by diverting a young man's attention and energy to his age-set friendships and the aesthetic and military values he learns there (*The Dinka and their Songs* 47).

Although undoubtedly patriarchal and stratified, some scholars suggest that the precolonial, precapitalist systems of these pastoral stateless societies allowed for competing sets of values that at least in theory offered options to those "at the lower end" (including women, commoners and younger men) to gain recognition, respect and dignity

from the members of their community (Deng *The Dinka* 164). According to Francis Deng, these "alternative paths" not only ameliorated any felt deprivation but also provided the space for acknowledging and valuing the crucial roles played by subaltern men and other marginal subjects in the production and reproduction of communal identity (*The Dinka* 164). Also writing about precolonial Dinka society, Beswick confirms Deng's assessment, and notes that "social differences were offset by reciprocity" in the early forms of social organization ("Women" 94).[12]

With the gradual introduction of Islam into the northern Sudan (from the 7th to the 14th centuries in northern Sudan), new forms of community emerged there as well as new forms of patriarchy and identification as alternative avenues to status and prestige for men were introduced. Prior to the establishment of the Turkiyya, the Sudan did not have a central state; the Funj Sultanate ruled from Sennar and the Dar Fur Sultanate maintained an independent state to the west. Gradually, the majority of tribes – both sedentary, known as the *awlad al balad* (sons of the country) and nomadic – became Arabized and Islamized. Given that the foundational institutions of Islam were formed outside of the African continent, David Robinson observes that "genealogical invention" was one of the ways Africans appropriated Islam as a central and powerful social identity (49). The *Tabaqat*, a biographical dictionary created by Muhammad wad Dayfallah in the late 18th century and genealogies compiled by Sir Harold MacMichael in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, are two significant sources documenting the dual processes of Arabization and Islamization in Sudan. The Tabaqat offers a picture of the vulnerability of Islamic institutions establishing themselves on the "frontier of Islam" and depicts

Muslim missionaries as *fakis* (teachers and holy men) instructing the community in the proper application of Islamic law (Holt 33).[13] Without a central state structure, power rested in the hands of individual tribal groups, and with the influence of popular Islam, holy families emerged as a powerful social and political force, eventually incorporating themselves in the ruling hierarchy (Warburg Islam 3).[14] These holy families were recognized as such in light of their members' professional affiliations with law and religion, but more significantly in light of their possession of *baraka,* a heritable and beneficent spiritual power (Warburg *Islam* 1 – 3). Later genealogies compiled by MacMichael show the increasing legitimacy of Muslim and Arab affiliation, and the political importance of descent claims as genealogists "lay stress upon the descent of the Funj from the Umayyads, that of the riverain tribe of the Ja'aliyyin from the 'Abbasids, and of more than one holy family from the Prophet" (Holt 27). Commenting on this process of shifting alliances, Fadl Hasan notes the dubious but "ubiquitous Arab ancestry of the Beja" (*The Arabs* 139).

The introduction of state Islam had contradictory effects on kinship relations and the social fabric in Sudan. Theoretically and in its ideal form, Islam provided a framework for the constitution of the *umma* (community), a universal community of believers. The authorities of the Turkiyya attempted to integrate the tribes into their administration and to standardize the sources of Islamic law and authority. Much later, and in a different context, the Mahdist state (1885 – 1898) was a theocracy led by Muhammad Ahmad viewed by many scholars as *Abu'l-Istiqlal,* 'The Father of Independence,' in that he "united the tribes of the Sudan by an Islamic ideology, drove

out the alien rulers, and laid the foundations of the nation-state" (Holt 87). Voll has argued that the significance of Muhammad Ahmad's movement was not the emergence of "nationality" ideology or the "nation-state" per se, but rather the mobilization of an *umma* (community) based on Islamic principles ("Eastern" 153).

Other scholars focus on the socio-economic transformations, and specifically developing forms of capitalism that precipitated, undergirded, and resulted from the Ottoman state and Mahdist state (see Hale *Gender* 66). Hale documents the way these economic changes were linked to a centralizing state and concomitant fracturing and eventual integration of multiple communal structures into a state governed from the capital. As part of a capitalist world system, the Ottoman administration also introduced widespread slaving, ivory hunting and gold mining, which the Mahdist regime continued, creating Sudan into what Hale calls an "exploited frontier on the peripheries of the capitalist world system" (*Gender* 66)[15] The reorganization of the economy and society disrupted kinship ties and introduced new gender relations (Hale *Gender* 66). Remembered as "the time when the world was spoiled" by many Dinka (Deng *Dinka* 73), the violent intrusion of Muhammad Ali's armies and the resulting amplification of the trades in slaves and ivory forced many communities to migrate and restructure, and for the first time in their political history, women were elected to take the place of male chiefs (who were killed, exiled or imprisoned) (Beswick "Women" 63). For the first time, large numbers of men in the south were captured and sent to the north of Sudan, some acculturating into Northern families as slaves and others escaping and becoming a part of the detribalized communities in the urban centers (Sikainga "Military"; Sikainga *Slaves*).

Shawn Marmon has written about slaves as "kinless beings" and "true outsiders" in Islamic societies but also the way manumission created the conditions for "pseudo-kinship" at a time when bonds of kinship were threatened by capitalism and cash exchange (*Slavery* 15). Mark Nikkel has noted the "misery of orphanage" among the Dinka, and the lifelong stigma of being parentless, and Huby notes that the Bari refer derogatorily to individualized urbanites as "the people without a tribe" (240), yet these disconnected individuals were compelled to fashion new ties in the north (79). Christianity became one avenue for slaves and ex-slaves to fashion new ties, and some were drawn to Catholic orders such as that started by Daniel Comboni in 1872. These slaves and ex-slaves, such as the Nuba woman who became known as Bakhita, converted to Christianity and evangelized their own people (Wheeler "Sudan's" 11 – 12).[16]

Other southern men who were not enslaved migrated north seeking stability and economic prosperity. Some felt compelled to migrate as their environment was destabilized and invaded; others grew impoverished as their cattle were raided, decimated or devalued due to the increasing importance of a monetized economy. With a decrease in traditional sources of wealth, and the viability of pastoralism lessening, some young men chose to journey north to seek independent sources of wealth. In the north these "detribalized" men became part of a class of wage laborers (Hale *Gender* 66) or members of Muhammad Ali's army (Sikainga "Military"), and others returned with the hope of accumulating cattle and starting a family independently (Deng *Dinka and their Songs* 76). The growing dependence on the Sudanese national economy of southern groups such as the Dinka and the Bari, represented a threat to the power of male elders; young

men could potentially divert their newfound wealth away from their family, but many were persuaded by community norms to invest in their lineage and aspire to be an elder (Huby 241). The stigma of "going north" remained strong in Dinkaland into the Anglo-Egyptian period, but the changing socio-economic context compelled people to leave and so was irrevocably altering generational hierarchies and traditional status systems. Meanwhile, by the end of the Ottoman era, when the slave trade was official abolished, the *awlad al balad,* men of the Danaqla, the Ja'aliyyin and the Shayqiyya, previously forced off their agricultural lands, joined the private armies of the underground slave traders (Warburg *Islam* 7). Many men from nomadic groups such as the Kababish, prospered as they accepted payment from those slave convoys traveling through their territory (Warburg *Islam* 7). The British and Egyptians successfully limited Sudan's access to external markets during its Mahdist period, but after the Reconquest, commercial revival was a priority to British administrators, and control of southern territory, resources and peoples was crucial to this development (Johnson *Roots* 16 – 17).[17]

Political manipulations of kinship under Ottoman, Mahdist and Anglo-Egyptian rule had equally profound effects on the authority of traditional elders and spiritual leaders. The changes in religious administration introduced by the Ottoman authorities in the north had far-reaching effects that ultimately aimed at disunity rather than unity. Traditionally, elder men held a monopoly on sources of wealth and political authority, but their power was held in check by forms of consensus or communal norms. With the colonial interference, traditional Sufi leaders and heads of tariqas, and local fakis

(teachers) were undermined and traditional religious authority was destabilized as the administration attempted to bring all authority under their control. *Shari'a* courts were established for the first time and the holy families lost some of the power they wielded in the judicial sphere (Warburg *Islam* 9). The Ottoman administration did not want to dismantle tribal structures altogether, since they feared the results of a political vacuum, so instead they employed tactics of divide and rule, and exploited ethnic, tribal and religious divisions to their advantage. Ottoman administrators implemented the divide and rule method directly by appointing two Sheikhs of rival families to different factions of the same tribe, and employing violent methods of suppression if a Sheikh attempted to exert any agency or independent action (Warburg *Islam* 6 – 7). Some tribal authorities retained some power, but were integrated in the sense that they now represented central government and were forced to answer to appointed Sheikhs or to Copts who acted as tax collectors and lived among nomadic tribes who were outside the realm of direct control (Warburg *Islam* 6). Particular sheikhs, chiefs and male elites were chosen and rewarded with special privileges. Disapproving of most of the "holy families," the Ottomans patronized the Khatmiyya order (also known as the Mirghani family), who were considered educated and knowledgeable in Islamic law, at the expense of other order and social groups and playing up sectarian divides that still define Sudanese politics (Hale "Mothers" 374; Warburg *Islam* 10). Significantly, members of the Khatmiyya went into exile when the Ottomans were defeated by the establishment of the Mahdist state (1881).[18] The nomadic Beja, who controlled strategic trade routes on the northern border of what was becoming the Sudanese state, were refashioned as partners of the Ottomans

during their conquest and commended for their loyalty. Men served not only as traders and guides but also as postmen to remote areas of the Northern and Eastern Sudan (Moore Harell 124). The interdependence between the Beja and the empire grew to such a degree that after the overthrow of the Mahdiyya, a clan of 'Ababda tribesmen aided Kitchener's army in the 1898 reconquering of the Sudan by guiding them across the old trade routes. In fact, the British use of divide and rule was in many ways an extension of prior Ottoman colonial policies, only applied even more ruthlessly since the new colonial regime could not bear a repeat of the Mahdist revolution. Among societies, such as the Shilluk or Azande, with recognized lines of succession, British officials intervened and appointed a "loyal" candidate, usually a kinsman of the deposed leader who thereafter owed his power to the new government (Johnson *Nuer* 23). In order to transcend the problem of authority in decentralized societies, British officials colluded with particular men who persuaded them of their claim to the office, often winning great influence despite their illegitimacy and deviation from custom (Asad "Kababish" 87; Johnson *Nuer* 23). Like the Ottomans before them, the British recognized the importance of collaborating with and co-opting Sufi leaders in the North. Worried about what they perceived as parallel trends toward ecstatic religious expression and "fanaticism" in the South, which was embodied in the prophets of the Nuer, British administrators implemented policies delineating a hierarchy of chiefs and dispossessing the prophets of their power (Johnson *Nuer* 23). Also like the Ottomans before them, the Anglo-Egyptian period saw slaves and ex-slaves enter the city, but this time they were fugitives exploiting the chaos after the dissolution of the Mahdist regime (Sikainga *Slaves* 10). Concerned

about public order and the impact of large groups of unattached men, British officials employed contradictory means for controlling this population, including registration, forced recruitment into wage labor, and forced settlement in ethnic settlements (Sikainga *Slaves* 10 – 20).

It should be clear by now that one result of these collective attitudes and policies was the invention of essentialized "tribal" and "ethnic" identities that were then firmly tied to particular territories. On the other hand, colonial policies and Christian proselytization facilitated the dissolution of older ethnic categories and introduced new identities. Johnson articulates clearly a commonplace in Sudan studies when he writes, "[t]he delineation of tribal societies in the Sudan was very much a twentieth-century activity" (Johnson *Nuer* 23). Upon reflecting on the reasons for members of the Kababish tribe to choose the British colonial period as their "golden age," Talal Asad writes: "The period of Shaykh 'Ali's rule was indeed the golden age, for it was under him that the Kababish 'tribe' came into existence" ("Kababish" 87). But it was not only specific "tribes" that became clearly defined during this period. The conceptualization of the Sudan as made up of a "north" and a "south" was also solidified during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, although an understanding of two separate spheres, both geographically and culturally, existed before the British rule (Holt *A History;* Mosely Lesch *Sudan;* Johnson *Root Causes*). Scholars generally agree, however, that Anglo-Egyptian development policies were applied unevenly across the north and south, deepening the isolation of the south and the disconnection of the two regions. Furthermore, The Native Administrative Ordinances, The Closed Districts Ordinance

(1922), and the controversial "Southern Policy" (1930) pursued by the British served to cordon off the south and any communities recognized as "southern" and forbid Islamic proselytizing in these areas while welcoming Christian missions (Albino ix, 16 – 23; Bakheit 126; Wai 175 - 179). Some British officials, eager to 'protect' the south from the Islamized north of Sudan and also eager to distance themselves from the image of a predatory Ottoman regime, used a discourse of family to shape their persuasion, claiming "the Northerners will dominate the Southerners and treat them as their fathers did and that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon their children unto the third and fourth generation" (Wai 40). Sayyid Hurreiz notes the dualisms (such as North/South, Muslim/Christian, Arab/African, and Arabic/English) facilitated by the British policies ("Ethnic" 91). Disparities in the administration of the south, organized along the division between "pastoralists" and "agriculturalists" also led to inter-group fighting in the South. For example, the agricultural peoples of the South, including the Zande, Moru, Madi, and Lotuko were among the first to be "pacified" by virtue of their accessibility and were also among the first and largest group recruited into the Equatorial Corps and the police force in the South (Johnson *Roots* 18).

As suggested above, the Anglo-Egyptian conquest brought with it the re-introduction of Christianity into Sudan, after its dismissal during the Mahdist period, and this new development would have far-reaching effects on definitions of modern southern community and masculinity. Representatives of the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches arrived in Sudan weeks after Kitchener's declaration of victory, and when the "Missionary Regulations" were published in 1905, were assigned a "sphere of influence"

in the south so as to stem competition and rivalry among missionaries (Wheeler "Sudan's" 10). The Christian missions played an enormous role in shaping southern identity, as missions were restricted in the north, but were granted the responsibility for education in the south until the establishment of government schools in 1944 (Deng *The Dinka and their Songs* 10). The Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) founded its first station in Bor in 1905, and years following were marked by the ambivalence and hostility of pastoralist communities and others who associated these new intruders with the Turkiyya and sought to retain traditional forms of masculine behavior and achievement (Nikkel "Christianity" 78 – 79). Even if some among them rejected mission schools, preferring to stay in the cattle camps, others were influenced by Christian doctrine and education as early at the 1920, 30s and 40s. Hutchinson notes the emergence of the "Bull-boys," a new group of elite Nuer men in the 1940s defined by their acquisition of modern education and the absence of *gaar,* or facial scarification, an absence that implied the man had not gone through traditional initiation (*Nuer* 271, 288 – 290). The educated among the Dinka were known as "children of the missionaries" or "those who write" and perceived as a group apart, alienated from traditional ways. The newly educated actively grappled with their new position by appropriating the concept of "age-set," finding new forms of unity and solidarity across old hierarchies (*The Dinka and their Songs* 11). Still, the educated did not transition into traditional positions of authority easily; Deng notes that many among the Dinka continued to refer to the educated as the "younger generation" regardless of their age or status as elders; and

Hutchinson notes the resistance among some Nuer to the assumption of the role of chief by a Bull-boy, since he had not entered "manhood" (*Nuer* 288).

By 1947, the Southern Policy was reversed, but the historical development of the different regions in Sudan would continue to influence the trajectory of the post-independence period. In fact, the contests for territory, resources, and power, and the manipulations of clan, tribe, and ethnic group that began under colonialism only continued during postcolonial rule. Among the Nuba, as among other ethnic groups, the "expansion of the capitalist economy and the advance of Islam are eroding older lineages" (Davidson 307). Political parties in Sudan continued to be influenced by sectarian politics, and were divided among themselves (Johnson *Roots* 23). Beginning in the 1930s, and continuing through independence, the nationalist movement in Sudan dominated by northern Sudanese elite articulated an optimistic message of national unity, perceived as the solution to ethnic divides, "tribalism" and regionalism, which were assumed to be the result of colonial interference (Hurreiz "Ethnic" 92). There was no specific legislation in the 1950s, but the clear trend was toward Arabization which was equated with national unity (Hurreiz "Ethnic" 92). After a process of "Sudanization" led to the appointment of only northern Sudanese to all senior positions in the South, politically active southerners grew concerned and interpreted the events as a form of internal colonialism of the south by the north (Johnson *Roots* 27). When it seemed inevitable that they would be transferred to the northern barracks under northern supervision, members of the Equatorial Corps mutinied and began what would become the first civil war (1955 – 1972), led by the guerilla army the *Anya nya,* a Madi word

meaning "snake poison" (Albino 47). As noted above, the agricultural areas of Equatoria received the most economic assistance during the Anglo-Egyptian period, and it was from among these groups, rather than the Dinka and Nuer pastoralists, that the British drew members of the Equatorial Corps. Thus, the first civil war was sharply defined by the dominance of Equatorian groups, even as the pastoralist Dinka dominated the south numerically; this divide continued to create friction in the south in the post-independence period (Johnson *Roots* 27 – 29, 32).

During the postcolonial military regimes of General Abboud (1958 – 1964) and General Nimeiri (1969 – 1985), and the democratic period of 1965 – 1969 led by Sadiq al Mahdi, "national unity" was implemented through force and coercion even as the war continued in the south: in 1957, schools across Sudan, including the south, were nationalized, and Arabic became the language of instruction even though all lessons had previously been conducted in vernacular languages and English; Friday replaced Sunday as the day of rest by presidential decree, and *khalwas* (Qur'anic schools) were built across the south; in 1962, Abboud passed the Missionary Societies Act which served to restrict missionary activity, and in 1964, the government expelled foreign church workers and began implementing a series of aggressive policies of Arabization and Islamization including imposing Arabic names on rural Nuer children (Hutchinson Nuer 312 – 313; Wheeler "Sudan's" 22 – 23). Severe floods in the south forced mass migrations of Dinka and other southerners to Khartoum in the 1960s where men often joined Christian *nadin* (clubs), where they spoke their vernacular languages and sometimes converted. Other men were absorbed into the labor force and some were forcibly Islamized. The

paternalistic discourse of the colonists was inherited by postcolonial regimes in Sudan who tended to look at Southerners as "lost brothers" who needed protection and integration into an Islamic Sudan (El Effendi "Discovering"). Meanwhile, members of the southern political elite sought unity for the south, which had been divided into three provinces – Equatoria, Upper Nile, and Bahr al Ghazal – since the colonial period, and agitated for "self-determination" although some perceived this as a veiled quest for secession (Johnson *Roots* 31 – 32 Mosely Lesch 44). Nimeiri's rule (1969 – 1985) at first endorsed an ethnic pluralist and federalist approach, and he was the primary signatory of the 1972 Addis Ababa Accords that promised regional autonomy for a unified South, ended the first civil war and ushered in an eleven year period of peace (Mosely Lesch 45 – 47). The years of peace were a time of optimism and economic development and southern men were absorbed into the national army but also into civilian posts and wage labor. Masses of Nuer men migrated seasonally to Khartoum for construction jobs in the 1970s and into the 1980s, bringing cash back to their villages in the hopes of marrying and amassing cattle (Hutchinson Nuer 70). Among the Nuba travel to Arab towns such as El Obeid, or even to the capital, led some men to adopt new styles of dress and develop new tastes, which they brought back with them to their villages (Davidson 302).

The period of peace was threatened when Nimeiri began manipulating internal divisions in the south and preying on Equatorian fears of Dinka domination (Mosely Lesch 50). By 1977, pressured by northern interest groups and possibly personal religious conversion, Nimeiri became increasingly assimilationist and authoritarian, and

by 1983, he redivided the south into three provinces, remapped parts of the south so oil resources would be redirected north, and instituted shari'a law (Islamic penal, commercial and tax codes) across the country, allowing for amputation (Mosely Lesch 45 – 48). In the early 80s, Nimeiri also instituted *kasha,* a policy aimed at "repatriating" rural southern migrants in Khartoum to their "home" regions (Jok *War* 110). These events triggered the second civil war, this time led by Dinka Bor John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M).

Political elites in Sudan have employed a variety of tactics to redefine ethnic identity and transcend ethnic divisions, but are also to blame for the militarization of ethnic identity and what Jok and Hutchinson call "fratricidal conflicts" ("Sudan's" 127). Aware of the inter-ethnic conflicts during the first civil war, and rumors and stereotypes of "Dinka domination" and Equatorian elitism that permeated southern politics, John Garang and the SPLM spread an ideology of anti-tribalism and unity so that ethnic groups would begin to work together under the banner of a New Sudan. Their official aim became not only to overthrow the northern-dominated, national Islamic state in Khartoum, but restructure the Sudanese nation-state altogether (Jok and Hutchinson "Sudan's" 128; Khalid; Johnson). Although the leadership of the SPLM preached national unity, there was an underlying sense that southerners had to tackle ethnicization within the south and achieve unity on southern terms. One radical tactic to achieve "southernness" as a regional identity and, perhaps, "new ethnicity" that would transcend narrow parochial ties was the introduction of forced eradication of facial scarification among Nuer men. In 1986 – 87, Riek Machar, a Nuer commander in the SPLM who was

himself a "Bull-boy," issued a decree outlawing initiation rituals, and argued his decision on the basis of health concerns, sensitivity to Nuer marginalization in the modern world, and political interest in southern unity. Significantly, Nuer prophets and other rural villagers resisted this decree, often sending male youth to distant rural areas or to Khartoum to undergo the rite of gaar (scarification) (Hutchinson *Nuer* 296 – 298). According to Hutchison, throughout the 1980s, Nuer communities engaged in complex debates over the meaning and definition of "manhood," partly motivated by the changes incurred through the penetration of markets, out-migration by young men, increasing Christian conversion, and the needs for political unity among "southerners" that put into question traditional processes of initiation (270). Deng suggests that enlistment in the SPLA became a desirable substitute for older initiation rituals as those traditional forms disappeared with migration, economic deprivation and loss of cattle (*The Dinka* 72).[19] Older ethnic identification were also being replaced by racialized identities; for example, as early as 1970, ethnic Dinkas were speaking of their condition in terms of their "blackness" and expressing solidarity with other "blacks" in Sudan (Deng *The Dinka* 121).

Despite Machar's introduction of new strategies to transcend ethnic divisions, he participated in the ethnicization of the conflict when he initiated a failed coup against John Garang and then split from SPLA/M forming a "SPLA-Nasir" faction (Jok and Hutchinson "Sudan's" 126). Jockeying for power, and especially for access to the aspired Southern state, Garang and Riak armed their respective militias, forcibly recruited young boys as child soldiers and began to target civilian populations along ethnic lines, a

conflict that became known among ordinary people as "the war of the educated" since both Garang and Machar were educated in modern schools and acquired doctorates in the United States (Jok and Hutchinson "Sudan's" 131; Jok *War* 158 – 159).[20] Although originally a "war of the educated," the violence soon spread among the rank and file and young men were taught that "only the gun" separated them from power and their only loyalty was to the gun (Hutchinson "Spiritual" 144). Jok discusses in detail how the militarization of Dinka male identity led to increasing rates of unofficially condoned rape, assault and domestic violence among the Dinka ("Militarization" 427 – 446):

> The militarization of Dinka culture has produced an ethos of manliness, tactical necessity, and unity among men, and has subjugated or annihilated other values and civic organizations. A mythology of brotherhood created myths of women as not being necessary or needed by men, while simultaneously producing the myth and fear that procreation was the inevitable expression of brotherhoods in action. (430)

Meanwhile, the central Khartoum government fanned the flames of these conflicts as part of its long-standing efforts to wage a "proxy war" against the SPLA (Jok and Hutchinson "Sudan's" 128 – 129). As part of its efforts to quell ethnic conflict that had gotten out of control, the SPLA, with the help of international relief organizations, initiated New Cush in 1994, an experimental village with no tribal identity (Finnegan 52).[21]

The installation in 1989 of the National Islamic Front marked the beginning of the world's only Sunni Islamic Republic, described as "middle-class, modernist and Islamist" by Sondra Hale ("Mothers" 373). The architects of the Islamist revolution, especially Hasan al Turabi and General Omar al Bashir, have sought to transform their society and redefine gender and family ideals, applying the slogan "defending the faith, rectifying

morality, and ending corruption" (Abusharaf 6). The regime continued the strict application of shari'a law, as initiated by Nimeiri in 1983, and consequently Islamized all state institutions, including the Institute of Music and Drama, and outlawed any ritual or performance deemed "non-Islamic" (Al Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 2004 79, 82). Just as southern leaders facilitated the militarization of identity in southern communities, the central government has employed new tactics to construct the model citizen who serves a militaristic Islamic hegemony by supporting the *mujahadiin,* or holy army, against threatening outsiders (Hale "Mothers" 377). Significantly, Hale notes a shift in identification among northern Sudanese elites in the period since 1989 from "Arab" to "Muslim" and argues that the category of "Muslim" serves several purposes, including enacting a rhetorical distance from "Arab" slave trading, taking advantage of global Islamic movements, and repudiating "Arab" patriarchy among new modern elite Muslim women and the new Muslim man (377). A parallel development to the Islamization of the contemporary period is the Christian evangelization of the South since the 1970s (Duku "Development" 39 – 60; Hutchinson *Nuer* 299 – 350; Nikkel "Children" 61 – 78; Nikkel *Dinka*; Wheeler "Sudan's" 10 – 35; Wheeler "Church Growth" 11 – 38). Although individual southerners have converted to Christianity since the 19th century, some were prompted by their experiences during the first civil war (Poggo "Kuku" 129 – 130).[22] The association of Christianity with book-knowledge, sophistication also prompted some to convert (Deng *The Dinka and their Songs* 12; Hutchinson Nuer 314). By the 1980s and 90s, widespread devastation of livelihoods prompted some rural Nuer to link their indigenous religions with Christianity by viewing conversion as a means to

rid the world of "evil divinities" (Hutchinson *Nuer* 315). The introduction of evangelical Christianity has had an enormous impact on southern communities, changing modes of dress, funerary practices, cultural expression, and values, and in many cases strengthening patriarchal systems through the enforcement of new forms of morality that directly and indirectly controlled and stigmatized women (Hutchinson Nuer 335 – 336).[23]

Migration within and without of Sudan has been an historical constant, but since the 1989 coup, prolonged war, political and economic collapse, internal migration as well as external migration has been at an all-time high, creating new conditions for the constitution of kinship and expression of masculinity.[24] Most significantly for this dissertation, many southerners are now migrating to the north not only as slaves or soldiers, but as displaced peoples, students, and economic migrants. While the degree of coercion and agency in each of these migrations is a complex matter needing further analysis, it is inarguable that these new contemporary circumstances create entirely new frameworks for the expression of identity, whether ethnic, regional, religious, national, or transnational.

Chapter Summaries

In Chapter One, "The Kinlessness of Mustafa Sa'eed: Parentage and the Migration North in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North,*" I suggest that Sudan's ethno-religious division into a geography of "North" and "South" is revealed through an analysis of Mustafa Sa'eed's "kinlessness" and the inextricability of that

kinlessness from the reality of his parentage. Rather than accept at face value Sa'eed's status as "orphan" as much of the previous scholarship on the novel does, I direct our attention to the evidence of his parentage in the book and proceed to ask how – with full knowledge of his parentage before us – his implied and ascribed kinlessness functions in the text. Long after Mustafa Sa'eed disappears from the village of Wad Hamid in Tayeb Salih's novel *Mawsim al-hijra ila shimal* (*Season of Migration to the North* 1966 / 69), a Sudanese civil servant and colleague of his speculates on his origins and ancestry:

> His father was from the Ababda, the tribe living between Egypt and the Sudan. It was they who helped Slatin Pasha escape when he was the prisoner of the Khalifa El Ta'aishi, after which they worked as guides for Kitchener's army when he reconquered Sudan. It is said that his mother was a slave from the south, from the tribes of Zandi or Baria – God knows (54)

In the midst of his reminisces, made while he travels on a train, a relic of British modernity, the civil servant disparages the tendency of the colonial government to show "favour to nonentities" (53) and adds a page later, "[i]t was such people that occupied the highest positions in the days of the English. [I]t was the nobodies who had the best jobs in the days of the English" (54). His speculations on Sa'eed's (rumored) background are thus framed by such sentiments.

This chapter performs an archeology of the civil servant's statements, statements overlooked in previous criticism on this now canonized exemplar of postcolonial literature in the academy. Generally treated as a novel that explores the colonial encounter as a "cosmic contradiction" that supersedes all local differentiations (Seikaly 141), I ask what happens when we re-situate and re-trace the narrative conflicts back to the location of narration – that is, to the specific colonial and postcolonial space we call

Sudan. I argue that from this perspective, Mustafa Sa'eed's alienation and dislocation are not only a product of colonial intrusion and disruption but symptoms of a much longer history of exploitation, uneven development, and social stratification, a history that stretches back to a previous colonial intrusion - the Ottoman empire - and before. In this reading, "South" becomes not only a tag for Africa or the colonized world, but more precisely a referent for the South of Sudan as historical/commercial geography of raw materials and slaves, the heritage of Sa'eed's mother; "North" is no longer, or not simply, a descriptor of Europe, but also the North of Sudan as borderland for Muhammad Ali's Ottoman armies, topography for nomads and the Beja of Sa'eed's father, and destination for slaves and ex-slaves.

My analysis suggests that the novel traces a submerged history of Sa'eed's parents: the Beja from the North and the slave from the South, and in this way explores the opposing ideologies of "freedom" and "servility." Drawing on anthropology and history, I ask how an understanding of the Beja's ambivalent status as mythical nomadic figures and marginal occupants adds to our understanding of Sa'eed's own "traitorous" and boundary-crossing behavior. Drawing on recent scholarship on slavery in Sudan as well as concepts circumscribing the slave within Islamic law, I suggest that Sa'eed's identity and stigma as wandering stranger carries with it important contextualized meanings and contributes to an interpretation of locality as well as global postcoloniality. I suggest that Mustafa Sa'eed's occupation as economist and the way his personal relationships revolve around informal and formal contracts, point to the text's underlying

themes of the breakdown, commodification, – and persistence – of inherited ties and their relationship to a society in transition in 1966.

Chapter Two, "'Summarizing the South': Staging Kinship and Unity in Select Plays by The Kwoto Cultural Center," explores the "North"/ "South" divide from the perspective of displaced southerners living in the north of Sudan. This chapter moves to the realm of performance, from literacy to orality, and from the single author to the collective. Whereas in the previous chapter, I single out and interpret one novel from among an author's works, in this chapter I argue that Kwoto's plays are best understood as a corpus of texts, and so I analyze four plays, selected both for the way they dramatize the themes of kinship and for their representativeness of the styles and genres adopted by the troupe. After an introduction to some of the salient themes of the chapter and an introduction to the troupe and its context, I discuss my methodology and fieldwork in Sudan, and then offer a selective overview of Sudanese performance traditions that are relevant to a reading of Kwoto's theater. Finally, I turn to an analysis of the plays, focusing on how each play engages kinship as a prism through which to understand changing relations among southerners and between southerners and those external to the community, including ancestors, northerners, Westerners, aid workers and transnational diasporic blacks. So, for example, the brief improvisation *Haj Youssef* spoofs newly displaced families who, without state documentation, literacy or the ability to communicate in Arabic, wander lost in the streets of Khartoum. I suggest that *Haj Youssef* depicts the rural newly displaced as displaying a lost virility faced with urbanized southerners who may take advantage of them. The improvisation suggests that the

immersion in one's indigenous southern language is not enough to cope in the urban center, and opens the space to consider pan-southerner unity. I suggest the play *al-Hoosh* stages intoxication as the entrenchment of the desire for power by the patriarch in a displaced home against the backdrop of the actual diminishment of power of elder southern men in the city of Khartoum. The play critiques poor housing conditions in Khartoum, but also uses a newly displaced younger man to open up questions of self-reliance and ethical community. *Warnish* stages the fantasies of *shamasha,* or street boys, who attempt to imagine alternative kinship ties among themselves while they are ousted by northerners who demonize them as parasites and southerners who fear the boys' disconnection from history. The boys in *Warnish* dramatize southern anxieties and ambivalence around the specter of assimilation into northern society and the market economy that may lead to individual success but also monetizes lineal obligations and commodifies every exchange. The play *Marhoum Alif* self-consciously points to the historicity of southern loss of lives in Sudan, and ties the loss of lands and property in the second civil war to earlier Ottoman invasions in the South. Here, I suggest that the displaced southerners point to their prior histories as slaves and soldiers in the North and actively appropriate that history as a form of public memory. I further suggest that in this production, Kwoto appropriates powerful ancestor rituals observed by many southern communities, and by decontextualizing and secularizing these rituals, employs them as a mechanism for unity and survival in the urban north. Finally, I consider the theater troupe itself as enacting alternative models of kinship – an "age-set of the educated" – for the southern youth who participate and in relation to their multiple audiences. In light of the

failure of the state to provide for its citizens, Kwoto members, in their plays and administrative materials, ask NGOs and international development organizations to intervene and in the process endeavor to redefine kin structures.

Conclusion

Kwoto's plays circulate within a very different milieu and for a very different audience than Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North.* Although Salih has secured his place within Sudanese literary history and is well-known among northern Sudanese intellectuals, and although the Managing Director of Kwoto, a university graduate with a post-graduate degree, had read *Season,* most of the members had never heard of the text or its author, who, as a prominent northern Sudanese moves in a very different social space than the displaced southern Sudanese who make up both Kwoto and its audiences. By juxtaposing the literary and the performative, I seek to diversify the kinds of texts we consider and compare in our analysis of the postcolonial. Pairing a novel with performance texts brings into sharp relief the conditions of production and interpretation for each form, also reminding us of the historical context of a form's cultural ascendance. I also think it is important to juxtapose unpublished manuscripts with an international novel in order to destabilize the boundary between "elite" and "low" cultures and arrive at a more accurate picture of the heterogeneity of the cultural marketplace in African societies than postcolonial scholarship has heretofore allowed. In his review of a groundbreaking anthology *Readings in African Popular Fiction* edited by

Stephanie Newell, literary scholar and Hausa specialist Novian Whitsitt speaks of the distorted picture we are sometimes guilty of perpetuating in the academy:

> As the study of African literatures moves into the twenty-first century, one might assume that the conventionally made distinction between so-called "elite" and "low" literatures, bifurcations with its roots in Western academic aesthetics, would have shown signs of dissipation, given African literature's own painful experience of marginalization within the academic canon. But a quick perusal of course syllabi on African literature across the country demonstrates that "popular" works rarely find a place in the booklists. The academic prejudice toward "literature of the masses" continues to silence the subaltern voices and ignore the literature creations most often read by African peoples. ("Readings" 192 – 193).

The subject of Whitsitt's review, Stephanie Newell, is herself a pioneer in the recovery and analysis of popular African texts. Discussing the application of postcolonial theory to the study of African popular cultural materials, Newell asserts, "Local [novels] are anchored within particular social formations in a far more explicit manner than internationally available African texts" (*Ghanaian* 152). Indeed, the juxtaposition of *Season* with Kwoto's unpublished manuscripts allows us to probe the resonances across regional, ethnic, and generic difference, and to examine how the "problem of the South" – or more broadly, the divisions between "North" and "South" in Sudan are negotiated and become visible in different cultural products. I argue in the chapters that follow that kinship becomes one vehicle these texts use to discuss the transformation of ethnic, religious, class, and geographic identities and the ambivalent processes of integration and individuation.

Up until recently, kinship has not been an explicit category of analysis for literary criticism of African literature.[25] The emergence and consolidation of the scholarly field of African literature in the 1970s happened to coincide with the demise of kinship

studies. As anthropologist Janet Carsten notes, kinship held a central place in the social sciences and especially anthropology for over a century (2). Anthropologists' emphasis on kinship in part reflected the centrality of kinship systems to organizing society, as described by many scholars. I. M. Lewis makes this point when he writes in *Blood and Bone* that there is "no significant area of Somali social activity where the influence of kinship is absent" (vii).[26] However, as anthropologists subjected their discipline to critical analysis in the 1960s and 70s, some argued that the emphasis on kinship was equally a product of anthropology's – and more specifically structuralism's – interest in and quest for stability. That is, anthropologists' desire to find stabilizing structures led them in some cases to emphasize kinship systems over other parallel or competing social networks.

From the 1970s onward, attention to kinship diminished as scholarly interest turned to constructivist explanations of social identities. Thought by some to be aligned with "biological fact," kinship did not seem to accord with this new focus of scholarly concern. Furthermore, kinship was understood as aligned with structure and stability while scholarly preoccupations moved to individual agency, practice and social change. Carsten argues that in the shadow of the feminist movement of the 1970s, "gender" overtook "kinship" as a favored object of analysis (2 – 3; 6 – 14). The turn to "gender" is apparent in any overview of African literary criticism since the 1970s, but especially since the 1980s and 1990s. Since the 1970s, and especially the 1980s and 1990s, feminist scholars of African literature have actively engaged gender as a category of analysis, but they have not applied or analyzed kinship terms in any systematic way.

However, Janet Carsten says that the impetus for her 2000 edited volume *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship,* is the revival of the study of kinship in anthropological and social science circles in the 1990s, and this can be seen by a renewed interest in kinship by African scholars in many disciplines. In light of the disintegration of the state in Somalia in the early 1990s and the ferocity of the Somali civil war, historians Ahmed Samatar and Abdi Ismail Samatar have called for a renewed critical analysis of the transformation of traditional kinship structures into clanism under capitalism and colonialism (Samatar "Destruction"). Both have also called for a selective "return to kinship" (Samatar "Curse" 134) as one source for the reconstitution of the Somali state along lines that respond to local needs and conditions. African social scientists concerned with analyzing gender and interlocking systems of domination, such as Amadiume, Oyewumi and Nzegwu, have also returned to kinship for answers to questions of equitable social arrangements in the postcolony. Amadiume suggests that European preoccupations with the nuclear family and patriarchy have been projected onto the African society. While Amadiume's work is provocative and useful for its opening up of dialogue, her focus on the Igbo in Nigeria is sufficiently different from the situation in Sudan as to be only marginally relevant to this study. Still, her attention to indigenous terminology and the linguistic codes of kinship is suggestive of the productive avenues I suggest for scholars in postcolonial literary studies, and is symptomatic of current research among Africanists across multiple disciplines. For example, in several articles, a book and an edited volume, Oyewumi calls for a careful reconsideration of indigenous kinship terminology and the meanings accorded these terms in local settings. All of these

scholars argue that indigenous kinship systems are rich reservoirs for the rebuilding of postcolonial societies.

These scholars have retrieved kinship studies from its compromised position as a subject area codified during colonialism in the discipline of anthropology and refused to allow its disciplinary origins to overshadow its precolonial reality and useful applications in the postcolonial era. A decade ago, literary scholar Christopher Miller put forward a strong argument in his book *Theories of Africans: Francophone Literature and Anthropology in Africa,* for the indispensability of anthropology to literary scholars. Since at one time anthropology was practically synonymous with kinship studies, what Miller says is of interest to this project. I quote him at length from his introduction:

> Thinking programmatically about Western approaches to African literature leads me to one major hypothesis, around which the rest of this book will turn: that a fair Western reading of African literatures demands engagement with, and even dependence on, anthropology. The demonstration of this point begins from the premise that good reading does not result from ignorance and that Westerners simply do not know enough about Africa. Much of what I will be arguing here grows out of my basic belief that no responsible Western reading of African literature can take place in the vacuum of a 'direct' and unmediated relationship with the text. What the literary text says is necessary but not sufficient; other texts must be brought into the dialogical exercise of good reading. Taken at face value, my hypothesis means simply that any non-African reader (or even an African reader from a different cultural area) seeking to cross the information gap between himself or herself and an African text will very probably be obliged to look in books that are classified as anthropology" (4)

Kinship as a subject area has enjoyed a revival in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, perhaps due to postmodern anxieties over social disintegration and fragmentation, and an interest among African authors and artists to imagine more equitable and sustainable ways of relating. Importantly for this project, the interest in kinship among African male authors signals an interest in envisioning new ways of being and becoming a man, new

ways of initiating adulthood, and new ways of inhabiting "individualism" and "autonomy" that are not predicated on murdering the other. The kinship system that in the precolonial era was a mode of organizing the collectivity has been transformed beyond recognition. The politicized system opportunistically engineered during the postcolonial era, influenced by developments during the era of the slave trade and colonial regimes, is about individual gain and aggrandizement (Mbembe *Postcolony* 13, 24 – 65).[27] Informed by scholars who have begun the process of revisioning kinship studies, I suggest we should use the analytical tools available to us to confront kinship both as a hegemonic discourse and as a productive, enabling and flexible vocabulary, a vocabulary that African authors are already grappling with in their works. The texts at the center of this investigation examine the repercussions of the loosening of kinship structures, their decontextualization and reconfiguration in new forms.

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[1] The Somali term *Wadaad* is by definition synonymous with the Arabic *Sheikh*, which is also used in Somalia. Lewis notes that in practice, however, a Sheikh is someone who demonstrates expertise in written Arabic, the Qur'an and Islamic law, whereas the Wadaad may not be able to write Arabic and has little formal religious training. In the short story, the Wadaad is the one who diagnoses Halima with possession and asks Halima to marry him, but she refuses. The story is very brief and does not elaborate on whether the Wadaad is aligned with the village and urban patriarchies or should be seen as apart from them, or whether the Wadaad is untrustworthy due to his position as representative of "popular" rather than orthodox, or literate, Islam. *Jinni* is the Arabic term for spirit – (*pl. jinn*). The belief in possession by jinn, and rituals to deal with possession, predate Islam and play a major role in popular religious expression among Muslim communities, and especially women, in Africa and the Middle East (for Sudan, see Boddy 1989 and Makris *Changing* 2000; for a broader look at Africa and the Middle East, see Lewis *Women's Medicine* 1991).

[2] Writing about kinship in Somali society, I.M. Lewis writes "marriage is the union of a man and woman of different, and potentially hostile, lineages" (Blood 55). Also see Kapteijns "Women" 217. Kapteijns writes, "the clan (or subclan) had been a community of men who married and had children by *women from other communities* ("Women" 225 my emphasis).

[3] Halima's mother is completely absent from the story.

[4] In her discussion of the role of women in Somali history, Christina Choi Ahmed argues that within a patrilineal-kin corporate-structured society, a woman retains power as a sister even after she marries and loses power as a wife with her husband's kin (172).

[5] This is true of many societies in Sudan. For example, the Nuba of Kordofan, Sudan are a lineage-based society, which Davidson argues is characterized by "kinship and an attendant hierarchic age-based structure – the division between elders and juniors, and the particular role of women. []Elders control the conditions of marriage and assimilation into the community, and therefore also gain access to and control of wealth" (105).

[6] I will be using the terms "clan" and "tribe" to refer to different forms of social organization in this introduction and in the dissertation as a whole. Definitions will follow, but I would also like to mention that I am aware of some controversy attending terms like "tribe" which has been discredited by scholars as a relic of colonial language and primitivizing discourse. Scholars of Sudan and Somalia, however, continue to use "tribe" (or qabila/gabila which means tribe in Arabic) and clan, citing their historical significance and continuing importance to these two areas. Justifying his use of the word "tribe," Johnson writes, "The word 'tribe' has been discarded in much anthropology, except where it translates a local word, and is resented in much of Africa as a pejorative term. Its retention here is justified because of its specific political meaning in the ethnography of the Sudan, and because most Sudanese, both Southern and Northern, recognize the existence of tribes and willingly assert their membership of them. The Arabic word for tribe, *qabila*, is commonly used through the Sudan" (*Root Causes* xvii). As I explain in my footnote to Kwoto's Personnel Chart (see Appendix A), "tribal" affiliation was a crucial aspect of individual but also group identity for Kwoto and its members. Writing from the literary critic's point of view in his 1990 book, Christopher Miller describes his reasoning in using the word "caste" in his analysis of Mande literarature, "That is to say, I will use the word as it is used in francophone West Africa[]. In this case as in many others, European-language terms have been appropriated and recontextualized in Africa: thus vocabulary considered politically incorrect in the West – words like 'tribe,' 'hut,' and 'caste' – are used in part of Africa without negative connotations" (*Theories* 78). Even more recently, Kole Omotoso (2004) has asserted that the attempt at what he calls a "post-tribal state" is but a continuation of colonial designs and that the recuperation and reinvention of "tribe" is the way forward for African states. In this regard, he cites theater as the primary medium sustaining a healthy connection to tribal affiliations as a resistance to coercive forms of globalization and imperialism. He writes: "In the meantime, theatre, drama and performance will continue to assert that the holy places of African peoples are not in Jerusalem, not in Mecca and Medina, not in the consumer emporiums of London, Paris, New York and Tokyo. Rather, our performance traditions will continue to assert that our holy places are next door to us, in the affirmation of our tribal identity within the embrace of our modern African country's identity, and that our everyday sacred and secular rituals continue in our indigenous languages" (12).

[7] Historical evidence shows that matrilineal system of succession was prevalent in pre-Islamic northern Sudan (Fadl Hasan *The Arabs* 14 – 15). The Beja, for example, followed matrilineal systems of succession and Beja royalty married Arab women settlers. Their children were then considered Arab (Fadl Hasan 139). Also see *A History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan* by Andrew Paul (1954). The Beja have been incompletely incorporated into the nation, and have retained their language and customs. At independence, the Beja Congress was formed and there has been a resurgence of Beja resistance throughout the postcolonial period (Johnson *Root Causes* 137).

[8] According to Deng, a commoner may have one wife, but a Chief could have more than 100 wives (*Dinka and their Songs* 8).

[9] Beswick notes that the Nuer have had even more relaxed means for the assimilation of outsiders than the Dinka. It was historically possible to "become Nuer" by completing a ritual act. On the other hand, marriage has been the only avenue available to become Dinka (Beswick *Sudan's* 135).

[10] The Nuer, another major pastoralist group, do not practice widespread circumcision (Hutchinson *Nuer* 314). It is impossible to make broad generalization across the heterogeneity of Sudan, or the south.

[11] Although I am focusing on the Dinka here, other pastoralist groups observe similar rituals. The Nuer, for example, also mark young mens' foreheads with six parallel scars across the forehead, which they call *gaar* (Hutchinson *Nuer* 270). On the other hand, the Anyuak do not scarify, so it is impossible to make generalizations.

[12] Kapteijns notes similarly about the precolonial Somali social organization. See "Women" 217.

[13] *Faki* is the Sudanese Arabic translation and adaptation of the classical Arabic word *faqih* meaning jurist.

[14] For more on the holy families, see P.M. Holt, *Holy Families and Islam in the Sudan* (1967).

[15] It is important to note that slaving and slave-raiding started much earlier in the history of Sudan. During the Funj Sultanate, slaves were limited to the nobility. According to Beswick (2004), the eighteenth century saw the emergence of more widespread slave-raiding, with the nomadic Baggara and itinerant traders (jellaba) receiving permission to make a raid as subjects of the sultan (157).
[16] I should note that Bakhita serves as a symbol of dignity for southern Sudanese Christians in Sudan and in exile. Kwoto members wore wrap skirts made of fabric imprinted with Bakhita's portrait. Eve Troutt Powell has written about the importance of Bakhita for southern Sudanese communities in Egypt ("Silence" xxxiii – xxxvii).
[17] Writing about colonial transformation among the Nuba, Davidson notes that "what was needed for capitalism to effectively remake lineages was the monetization of lineal obligations and exchanges" (122).
[18] The Khatmiyya order is a Sufi order founded in Sudan a short while before the Ottoman conquest by Muhammad 'Uthman al Mirghani, a migrant from Saudi Arabia. The order aimed to combine *Wahhabi* principles of puritan reform with Sufi mysticism, and were politically and theologically opposed to the Mahdist movement (Warburg *Islam* 5). The Khatmi order is still a major political party in Sudan and is opposed to the Ansar, the supporters of the Mahdi party.
[19] Jok and Hutchinson discuss the appropriation of Dinka and Nuer men's desire to protect their cattle by the SPLA. Calling them "Titweng" or "cattle guards," the SPLA commanders organized these men into modern militias, equipped them with AK-47s. The men perceived this as a way to redeem themselves and their "manhood" ("Sudan's" 134). The SPLA has been so successful in recruiting and training, that after eight years of fighting, the SPLA succeeded in driving the national army out of most of the South and stood poised for an assault on the regional capital at Juba (see Jok and Hutchinson "Sudan's" 126).
[20] After coming under accusations of human rights offenses, SPLA/M leadership argued that their societies were under threat of annihilation by the central government, and the enlistment of boys into the military should be seen as a defense against annihilation and protection against contemporary slave raids and forced assimilation (Jok *War* 158 – 159).
[21] Although there are interesting parallels between this experiment and earlier multiethnic settlements, such as the "Malakiyya" or colonial settlements for discharged, detribalized soldiers (sometimes ex-slaves), there are important differences as well.
[22] Some scholars suggest that Abboud's call to destroy churches and expel church officials in the 1950s had the paradoxical effect of prompting conversion to Christianity as a form of resistance.
[23] According to Hutchinson, new Christian adherents imposed "monogamy" to stigmatize junior wives but not their husbands (336). Furthermore, the prohibition against beer-brewing and dancing among the Nuer Christians undermined women's autonomy (336).
[24] Abusharaf says that Sudan is now the "largest exporter of migrants in Northeast Africa" (6 – 7).
[25] So, for example, even though kinship has remained a popular area of inquiry in British literature, resulting in the well-received 2004 volume *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture* 1748 – 1818; and in American literature, resulting in, for example, *Family, Kinship and Sympathy in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2004), there are no studies of African literature with "kinship" in the title.
[26] Lewis adds that a recently coined Somali term for "anthropologist" is *tol yaan,* or "one who knows or understands kinship" (vii).
[27] It is relevant to this dissertation that Mbembe uses the phrase "phallic domination" to describe the abuse of power in postcolonial societies.

Chapter One:

The Kinlessness of Mustafa Sa'eed:

Parentage and the Migration North in Tayeb Salih's

Season of Migration to the North

Long after Mustafa Sa'eed disappears from the village of Wad Hamid in Tayeb Salih's novel *Mawsim al-hijra ila shimal* (*Season of Migration to the North* 1966 / 69), a Sudanese civil servant and former colleague speculates on his origins and ancestry:

> His father was from the Ababda, the tribe living between Egypt and the Sudan. It was they who helped Slatin Pasha escape when he was the prisoner of the Khalifa El Ta'aishi, after which they worked as guides for Kitchener's army when he reconquered Sudan. It is said that his mother was a slave from the south, from the tribes of Zandi or Baria – God knows (54)[1]

In the midst of his reminiscences, made while he travels on a train, a relic of British colonialism and modernity, the civil servant disparages the tendency of the colonial government to show "favour to nonentities" (53) and adds a page later, about Sa'eed, "[i]t was *such people* that occupied the highest positions in the days of the English. [I]t was the *nobodies* who had the best jobs in the days of the English" (54 *my emphasis*). The civil servant's speculations on Sa'eed's (rumored) background are thus framed by such sentiments, sentiments that reveal the fissures in the national body, and Mustafa Sa'eed as a stigmatized man.

This chapter performs an archeology of such transitory statements, statements under-analyzed and overlooked in previous criticism on this now canonized exemplar of

postcolonial literature in the academy. I argue that a close analysis of such statements, a tracing of their historical contexts and connotations, aids us in opening up a space for alternative interpretations of the novel, and most specifically, the threatening presence of Mustafa Sa'eed. The interpretation I develop in this chapter highlights the specificity of Sudan as a site for the unfolding of the narrative, and allows for a more detailed consideration of the ways in which Mustafa Sa'eed is figured as a subaltern masculinity, and not simply a colonial subject. I argue that Mustafa Sa'eed's "kinlessness" both results from and is descriptive of his stigmatized genealogy and is a condition that carries pejorative connotations in the context of the narrative and the nation.

Critics have typically treated *Season* as a novel that explores the colonial encounter between Britain and Sudan (1898 – 1954) as a "cosmic contradiction" that supersedes all local differentiations (Seikaly 141).[2] Previous interpretations have for the most part reproduced a dominant reading in which the logic of the colonial encounter is privileged and becomes visible as a reference in the very title of the book: the migration North becomes a metaphor for the journey to Europe, and specifically, Britain as Sudan's former colonial occupier. While my analysis does not, and cannot, ignore this colonial encounter, I shift our attention from a fixation on the imperial metropolis and ask what happens when we re-situate and re-trace the narrative conflicts back to the location of narration – that is, to Sudan as a specific historical geography. I propose to extend the reach of our analysis not only geographically but temporally as well; my analysis seeks to highlight the way *Season* is conditioned by an historical frame that exceeds British colonialism. I argue that a postcolonial approach invested in reading the novel as solely

reflective of colonial dynamics and assuming the homogeneity of either the colonial project or the national space may be willfully blind to evidence of other conflictive undercurrents in the story. That is to say, in my reading, "North" is no longer, or not simply, a descriptor for Europe, but also the North of Sudan as borderland for Muhammad Ali's Ottoman armies, topography for nomads and destination for slaves and ex-slaves; "South," as the implied oppositional term to the "North" of the novel's title, becomes not only a tag for Africa, the colonized world, or even Sudan as colonized nation-state, but more precisely a referent for the South of Sudan as historical/commercial zone for raw materials and slaves.

I argue that Sudan's division into a "South" and "North" surfaces through an analysis of Mustafa Sa'eed's "kinlessness" and the inextricability of that kinlessness from the reality of his parentage. The civil servant's statements reveal the presumed identity of Sa'eed's parents, and by extension tie them to the expanse of a precolonial, as well as colonial, geography and history: the slave from the South of Sudan and the 'Ababda nomad from the North. For much of the novel, however, Sa'eed's ancestry is something to hide; for all intents and purposes, he is kinless. That Sa'eed's ancestry remains shrouded in mystery is a perplexing state of affairs in a village where family and genealogy are held in such high esteem. I contend that Sa'eed's "lack of kin" is not merely incidental, but rather central to his characterization, a condition I choose to describe as Sa'eed's "kinlessness," a term used by Shaun Marmon to describe the social condition of slaves in the Islamic Middle East (13 – 19). Marmon draws on debates and official decisions among Islamic jurists to elaborate on the condition of the slave and

writes, "Prior to manumission, the slave was basically a kinless being – a true outsider" (15), an assessment exemplified by legal scholar al-Barbarti's (d. 786 / 1384) definition of the slave as "legally dead" (*halik hukman*) (Marmon 4).[3] To describe Sa'eed's positioning by reference to his "kinlessness" is to acknowledge the centrality of kin to the construction of individual, communal, and, importantly, legal, identity and to recognize a stigmatized genealogy as a serious social injury in the social world the novel depicts. Rather than accept at face value Sa'eed's status as "orphan" as much of the previous scholarship on the novel does, I direct our attention to the evidence of his parentage in the book and proceed to ask how – with full knowledge of his parentage before us – his implied and ascribed kinlessness functions in the text. I argue that Sa'eed's "kinlessness" should not be viewed as a mere reflection of his reality, but rather has an ideological function; Sa'eed's kinlessness is symptomatic of a disavowal of his parents. Sa'eed's migrations north are significantly determined by his social positioning, but his migrations north may also – perhaps contradictorily – be read as escapes from the peripheral parents who nonetheless trail him closely.

My analysis thus suggests that in tracing the haunting presence of Mustafa Sa'eed the novel traces a submerged history of Sa'eed's parents: the 'Ababda (or, more broadly, Beja) from the North and the slave from the South.[4] I contend that the historical and anthropological literature on the slave and the Beja adds to our understanding of Sa'eed's characterization by connecting him to a lineage of precolonial and colonial border-crossing, and that a careful analysis of his characterization contributes to an interpretation of locality as well as global postcoloniality. I draw on recent scholarship on slavery in

Sudan and in Islam more generally and suggest that a deliberate attentiveness to Sa'eed's identity as a descendent of a slave illuminates the stigma he carries as a wandering stranger. Additionally, I examine medieval and colonial representations of the nomad, and more specifically, the Beja of the Northern Sudan borderlands, and identify how these representations intersect and resonate with Sa'eed's own traitorous and boundary-crossing behavior. In other words, Mustafa Sa'eed's exilic consciousness is not simply a universal condition, but has roots in specific and local events. I argue that from this perspective, Mustafa Sa'eed's alienation and dislocation – and his subalternity -- are not only a product of British imperial interference and influence but symptoms of a much longer history of exploitation, uneven development, and social stratification, a history that stretches back to a previous colonial intrusion - the Ottoman empire - and before.

The Quest to Know Mustafa Sa'eed: the Plot of *Season of Migration to the North*

Although much of the novel's plot is devoted to recounting the multiple tales of Mustafa Sa'eed's life, it is the narrator who is made most fully responsible for the telling of the story, and from the beginning he is fashioned as a modern, literate, cosmopolitan subject. He begins his frame narrative by recounting his own return to Wad Hamid after a seven-year absence during which time he studied in England, receiving a Ph.D. for research on an English poet. His depiction of his return to his natal village is awash in sentimentality and nostalgia: "The important thing," he says, "is that I returned with a great yearning for my people in that small village at the bend of the Nile. For seven years I had longed for

them, had dreamed of them, and it was an extraordinary moment when I at last found myself standing amongst them" (1). The narrator introduces his village – and opens the novel – with an address to "Gentlemen" and he guides his audience of gentlemen from the vantage point of post-independence Sudan.[5]

The narrator's own story becomes quickly intertwined with the story of the figure of Mustafa Sa'eed, a figure who appears to occupy a marginal position in relation to the audience of "gentlemen," and it is this figure that most disturbs the narrator's nostalgic mindset. Everything about the village seems the same to the narrator except this stranger, and the rest of the novel is structured as a journey to find the 'real' Mustafa Sa'eed. The narrator is consumed with curiosity about this stranger, asks about him repeatedly (2, 6) and cautiously engages him in conversation (8 – 9). Inquiring about the stranger produces small pieces of information – his appearance in the village five years before; his cash purchase of the land on which he finally settles; his marriage to Mahmoud's daughter, Hosna; his mysterious background and unknown genealogy; and his unobtrusive, even secretive demeanor. According to what the narrator can gather, Sa'eed's public persona seems impeccable. Not only does he participate in the village agricultural cooperative, he attends mosque regularly and maintains propriety in general. Until the narrator's return, Mustafa Sa'eed has effectively passed as a member of the village.

Finally, a drunken recitation of poetry in English forces Sa'eed to reveal himself in a way he had previously refused. The narrator is stunned to hear the English words, as Sa'eed hid any knowledge of the English language, as well as any hint that he might have traveled or lived outside of Sudan. But his use of English at his most vulnerable and

unguarded signals his thorough internalization of British culture and ambivalence towards and alienation from Sudan. Claiming that he has never shared his history before, Sa'eed makes clear that he is taking the narrator into his confidence primarily to protect his reputation in the community: "I was afraid you'd go and talk to the others, that you'd tell them I wasn't the man I claimed, which would – would cause a certain amount of embarrassment to them and to me" (17). After the narrator hesitantly agrees to keep all that he hears secret, Sa'eed shares paperwork establishing his identity (a birth certificate and passport). In the very next chapter, which is an extended section of the novel (19 – 44), Sa'eed wrests the first-person narration away from the narrator and proceeds to narrate his life from his early childhood through to his experiences as a student and lecturer in England. Sa'eed frames his narrative with the introductory statement, "It's a long story, but I won't tell you everything" (19) signaling the process of selection that shapes any life narrative and inviting us to pay attention to the chosen details.

Readers learn that Mustafa Sa'eed was one of the first generation of Sudanese born under Anglo-Egyptian Condominium rule. Encouraged and sponsored by the British to pursue higher education in London, Sa'eed's migration toward, and subjection to, the overlapping imperial zones is gradual, as he first enters Egypt and then settles in metropolitan Britain (19 – 29). Egypt as an intermediate step toward the imperial center recalls that nation's involvement in two theaters of empire: the Turco-Egyptian regime ruling Sudan from 1821 – 1881 and, later, the Anglo-Egyptian regime ruling Sudan from 1898 – 1954. In both cases, Egypt becomes a site from which to rule, although the power

to rule emanated from the seat of the Ottomans in the first case, and from Britain in the second case.[6]

At times casting doubt on the veracity of his narrative ("I don't ask you to believe what I tell you. You are entitled to wonder and to doubt") (21), Sa'eed depicts himself as an alienated child who develops into a brilliant student and socialite, nevertheless always haunted by the losses he endures through the mechanisms of colonialism. His alienation fuels both his academic excellence and the hatred directed toward white English women. He tells of his sado-masochistic fascination with these women which begins with his youthful attachment to the English wife of his English mentor in Egypt and continues when he seduces a string of British women from various class backgrounds in London. Manipulating colonial stereotypes and colonial desire, Sa'eed performs different versions of the "Afro-Arab" romantic lead, persuading successive partners that he loves only them. In each case, the woman succumbs to depression and commits suicide when he coldly turns his attention away from her. Sa'eed's story culminates with an account of his obsessive entanglement with a particular English woman with whom he confesses to falling in love and whom he eventually murders, and the chapter weaves together scenes from Sa'eed's trial for murder in London with scenes of seduction with various women. Although he is found guilty at his trial, his defense attorney argues that the damage wrought by colonialism is to blame for his condition, and that he is not fully responsible for his actions. Sa'eed is partially absolved of his actions, and the severity of his sentence is mitigated.

As Sa'eed tells his biographical narratives, the narrator's own story of migration is displaced. But after Sa'eed tells his story and reveals his outsider status to the narrator, he mysteriously disappears, thought to have drowned in the first Nile flood in thirty years (45). Sa'eed's disappearance sharpens the narrator's awareness of the fragmentary nature of the earlier confession, and intensifies his search for the real Sa'eed, as he is increasingly haunted by Sa'eed's past and intrusive memories of Sa'eed's voice. Although the narrator insists that Sa'eed is "not an obsession" (61), textual clues suggest otherwise. The memory of Sa'eed haunts the narrator (and by extension the reader) who "continues to meet up with him" even after Sa'eed has been dead for two years (50). Besides the lingering psychological link, the narrator is also materially linked to Sa'eed because he is left with Sa'eed's request that he look after his wife, Hosna, his two sons, and his secret room. The secret room, a grotesque recreation of an English study – complete with Victorian chairs, green marble fireplace, and library stocked with English-titled books disgusts and confuses the narrator who calls it a 'mausoleum.' Consumed by the will to know, the narrator's entry into the secret room in particular facilitates his stock-taking and journey to understand Sa'eed. The secret room provides him with diaries, photos and drawings, letters and other pieces of writing that help him tell the story that finally becomes the tale, the novel, told to the audience of "Gentlemen."

The narrator is not the only one affected by Sa'eed's presence and disappearance. Rather than lead to a tranquil period in the village, Sa'eed's disappearance serves as a catalyst for the emergence of latent generational, gender, and identity conflicts. Sa'eed's alignment with Hosna's prominent family facilitates his belonging to – his passing into –

the village, but Hosna too exerts agency by using her marriage to this stranger as a way to distance herself from normative village expectations and to clear a space for autonomous decision-making. The narrator is ambivalent about his role, desire and duty with regards to Hosna (Sa'eed's wife) after Sa'eed's disappearance, and delays acting. In delaying, he leaves an opening for the elder Wad Rayyes to assert himself as Sa'eed's successor, which leads to a fatal encounter between him and Hosna. Relying on and exploiting patriarchal custom, Wad Rayyes assumes his legitimacy and forces himself upon Hosna, who castrates him, kills him and then commits suicide. Traumatized by the upheaval and shaken by the presence of ambiguity where he previously only saw certainty, the narrator plunges into the Nile in what appears to be an attempted suicide, but tentatively chooses to live. The novel ends at this point.

Already a success within academic networks and from the perspective of literary critics, *Season* was reissued by Penguin books in 2003, the first Arabic text to appear in the Penguin Classics series (*Al Ahram* 2003). While the Arabic version of *Season of Migration to the North* has been widely read and commented upon, the English translation catapulted the novel into the marketplace of world literature, "trigger[ing] a series of translations into all world languages" (*Al Ahram* 2003) and transforming it into an exemplar of the postcolonial novel for university classrooms in the 1990s.[7] Translated into English for the first time in 1969 by veteran translator Denys Johnson-Davies in consultations with Tayeb Salih, the novel has appeared in several English editions, including a version issued as part of Heinemann's African Writer's Series, and most recently the Penguin version.[8] The Penguin version, complete with a new introduction

by the author, appears at the convergence of a number of events: the institutionalization of postcolonial studies in universities nationwide (even as postcolonial theory's utility and meaning are perpetually debated); academic, governmental, and public interest in Arabic-language studies and texts; international attention focused on crises in Sudan; and the ongoing Iraq war and attendant aspirations and anxieties associated with American empire.[9] In the Arabic context, the novel has been touted as one of the "six finest novels to be written in modern Arabic literature" by Edward Said. Season was in 2001 "selected by a panel of Arab writers and critics as the most important Arab novel of the twentieth century" as the Penguin edition reminds its readers. Salih's reputation as a "formative influence" in Arabic literature is considered so self-evident that when the 2005 Arab Novel Conference sponsored by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture awarded him the top honor, many were suspicious of the jury's motives in selecting such a canonized figure (Al Ahram 2005).[10] The acknowledgement of past praise, positive evaluation, and sanctioned interpretive contexts for the novel should not deter us then from recognizing Penguin's reissuing as an independent moment in *Season's* construction as "world literature." The details of the novel's inauguration as world literature, via the financing, translating, and publishing apparatus, is a complicated story beyond the scope of this chapter; however, that the material conditions of publication haunt the novel's pages is an assumption that guides my analysis.

My analysis was, of course, produced in conversation with existing work on the novel. In the following section, I offer a brief overview of the major approaches to Season, categorized by theme.

Literature Review

British Colonialism and its Discontents

The story of Mustafa Sa'eed in London is the most shocking in the book and is often the focus of critical commentary on the novel. It is, in fact, commonplace for the critical literature on the novel to note the significance of the dates of birth and disappearance of this character, since the dates (1898 – 1956) make his life coexistent with the birth and death of the colonial government, the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1898 – 1956), a "hybrid form of government" devised by consul-general Lord Cromer in Egypt as a way to appease Egyptian claims while securing British interests in the Sudan after the overthrow of the Mahdist state (Holt and Daly 118).[11]

Scholarly analyses published since *Season's* first appearance intensively explore the textual strategies by which Salih "writes back" to colonial authority and articulates with and against colonial narratives. In this vein, critics pursue readings of *Season's* intertextual engagements with European canonical works of literature and analyze how Salih's text "deconstructs colonial discourse itself" (Hassan *Tayeb* 90). A few critics seize on Sa'eed's self-comparison to Othello (38) and demonstrate how Salih's novel subverts representations of Shakespeare's famous moor (Harlow; Hassan 97; Krishnan; Said 209; Shaheen 156). Aside from *Othello, Heart of Darkness* is presented by critics as the key text with which *Season* is in dialogue, and literary critic Amyuni notes Salih's own assertion during a 1980 lecture that a primary influence upon *Season* was "Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* and *Nostromo*" ("Introduction" 15).

In an exemplary essay elaborating upon the links between the two works, Saree Makdisi asserts:

> If *Heart of Darkness* narrates the history of modern British imperialism from a position deep within its metropolitan center, *Season of Migration* presents itself as the counternarrative of the same bitter history. Just as Conrad's novel was bound up with Britain's imperial project, Salih's participates (in an oppositional way) in the afterlife of the same project today, by 'writing back' to the colonial power that once ruled the Sudan ("The Empire" 805).

Not all critics agree on how to interpret and evaluate Salih's intertextual project. Mohammad Shaheen, for example, cites numerous parallels between *Season* and *Heart* and argues that *Season* follows its precursor so closely as to remain merely imitative (156). Edward Said, on the other hand, recognizes the intertextual links but understands Salih's project as one of creative refashioning and "literary resistance" rather than imitation (*Culture and Imperialism* 209). In *Culture and Imperialism* Said argues that one of Salih's primary goals is to reclaim Conrad's fictive territory and thereby articulate "some of the discrepancies and their imagined consequences muffled by Conrad's majestic prose" (212). Said views this reclamation as part of a larger struggle by postcolonial writers in general to achieve recognition "on the very same territory once ruled by a consciousness that assumed the subordination of a designated inferior" (210). Likewise, Peter Nazareth emphasizes the "Conradian echoes" in *Season* (133 – 34) but argues that the novel reworks its European interlocutor, and R.S. Krishnan writes that "Salih's work reclaims for itself both the fictive territory and the imagined topos of Conrad's Africa, and substitutes a postcolonial retelling, a new mythos for Africa, for a colonizing tale" (7).

Many critical essays seek to explicate the ways colonial, and specifically British, history appears in the text and its contradictory effects on Sa'eed as a colonial subject. So, for example, Ni'ma analyzes the Victorian images that he identifies as surrounding Sa'eed (234). In her essay, Patricia Geesey explores the novel's commentary on "cultural hybridity and contamination" as an effect and result of colonial contact (128). In an early essay entitled "Season of Migration to the North: History in the Novel," Samir Seikaly justifies focusing on colonialism as a broad, undifferentiated project and maintains that Sa'eed's accomplishments and embarrassments cannot be fully understood except within the historical context of colonialism. Arguing in fact that the colonial encounter supersedes all else, he writes:

> In the colonial epoch, subsidiary contradictions in the native society, class conflict, ethnic tensions and religious strains, are all subordinated to the major contradiction between the foreign and the indigenous, the occupier and the occupied, the overlord and the subject, the white and the black. It is for this cosmic contradiction, into which he hurls himself with a mighty force, that Mustafa Sa'eed is born and is ultimately sacrificed. (141)

According to some critics, the "cosmic contradiction" of colonialism is narrativized through the mechanisms of migration. In their parallel journeys to London, and return to Sudan, the narrator and Mustafa Sa'eed play out a postcolonial narrative of migrancy to the imperial center and back to the putative margins. A central component of the colonial migration narrative is the way it narrativized the journey from the European imperial center to colonial periphery, a migration that was expressed in ideological terms as a journey from civilization to savagery, from historical time to "blank darkness" (Miller *Blank*). Salih clearly engages the ideological dimensions of the colonial migration narrative by staging the colonial subject's journey to the imperial center, and many early

critics of the novel examine the trope of the journey to the imperial center by the narrator and Sa'eed, producing studies comparing the postcolonial migration narrative in *Season* to narratives recounting a protagonist's travel to the West by other African and Arab authors, such as Ayi Kwei Armah, Tawfik al-Hakim, Yahya Haqqi and Suhayl Idris (Birbalsingh 65 - 73, Hassan 82 - 128). As I have already mentioned, some critics choose to emphasize *Season's* radical inversion of the colonial migration narrative's terms and assumptions by rewriting canonical versions of that narrative; for example, in his reading of the parallels between *Season* and *Heart,* Shaheen points out the identification between Kurtz and Mustafa Sa'eed, whose itinerary from south to north

> [E]choes Kurtz's journey, but in reverse…Kurtz in the Congo is a colonizer and invader. MS announces himself in England as conqueror and invader. Both MS and Kurtz practice violence in the land they invade… Each invader enjoys sexual orgies in the foreign land he invaded. Kurtz was partly education in England; so was MS. The special intelligence with which each character is endowed received particular emphasis in the narrative, and MS is, like Kurtz, a universal genius. The father of both are dead, and their mothers die while they are abroad. Both journeys begin out of poverty, which the protagonists leave behind… The journey itself is pursued with dark yearning for the remote (156 – 157).

In her extended reading of *Season* published in her book of lectures, *Death of a Discipline,* Gayatri Spivak states simply "It is Britain that is the "other place" in this novel" (56), implying that London becomes a barbaric periphery while the village in Sudan stands as the center of the character's lives.

Edward Said is one of the few critics to employ the Arabic term *"hijra"* in his analysis, and he seems to imply that the weight of the term helps distinguish the significance and value of *Season*'s migration from *Heart*'s:

> A voyage into the heart of darkness is thus converted into a sacralized *hegira* from the Sudanese countryside, still weighted down with its colonial legacy, into

> the heart of Europe, where Mostapha Said, a mirror image of Kurtz, unleashes ritual violence on himself, on European women, on the narrator's understanding. The *hegira* concludes with Said's return to and suicide in his native village (*Culture* 211).

In his book on Salih, Wail Hassan goes so far as to argue that it is migration that constitutes the animating focus of the novel; he suggests that the novel constantly overturns essentialist categories and binaries and that it is first and foremost migration that enacts this process of negotiation: "a constant, relentless migration that erodes the monolithic conceptions of identity and that asserts the dynamic primacy of history is the answer to the challenge of modernity" (*Tayeb* 88).[12]

Taking up Hassan's insight into migration as a vehicle for exploring the "dynamic primacy of history," I propose it is precisely a fuller consideration of the historical dimensions and connotations of *hijra* – rather than a general ahistorical conception of migration – that enhance our interpretations of Salih's novel. In my reading of the novel, I will draw upon the Islamic context and argue that this history is important for understanding the full spectrum of meanings – both denotative and connotative – attributed to *hijra,* which most often refers today to "emigration" and draws historically from the migration of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in AD 622, a migration that resulted in the strengthening and consolidation of the emerging Muslim community (Eickelman xii). Furthermore, I argue that an attention to Sa'eed's parents – the slave and the nomad – as migrating subjects affords us an opportunity to address the complexities and implications of *hijra* as a modality for the constitution of both the subject and the social, as well as the relationship of *hijra* to competing histories and forms of migration. I argue that the Qur'anic disparagement of

the mobility of nomads, the compelled migration of non-Muslims to enslavement in *dar al-Islam,* the movements of escaped slaves, fugitives, and tax-evading nomads during two colonial periods, all inform the histories of Sa'eed's parents and come to bear on the notion of hijra as a vehicle for producing the proper Muslim subject and community.

My contribution suggests we extend our analyses to account for the complex historical dimensions of migration (*hijra*) echoed in the novel's title. Most interesting from the perspective of this dissertation's focus is one of the literal meanings of *hijra,* noted by Khalid Masud as "'to break ties with someone' (such as a bond of kinship or other personal association)" (30). In AD 622, the Prophet Muhammad led his followers from Mecca to Medina, in search of a space more conducive to the flourishing of the nascent Muslim community. The resulting migration strengthened and consolidated the Muslim community in Medina, and also weakened the community's enemies in Mecca, some of whom were the relatives of the migrants, too weak to travel, reluctant to move, or ideologically opposed to the Prophet and his movement. Migrants were implored to abandon their primary associations and affective ties to their blood relatives and embrace their elective association to the *umma,* or newly emergent Muslim community. These layers of meaning are important, I suggest, to a historically sensitive reading of the novel.

However, as I mentioned earlier, most analyses seek to explicate the relationship of *Season* to the colonial migration narrative, most notably dramatized in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* In a more recent intervention, however, Byron Caminero-Santangelo argues that although Salih does indeed appropriate and reconfigure "Conradian elements," he does so not to scrutinize the relationship between colonizer and colonized, but rather "to

expose and attach the contradictions of late twentieth-century neocolonialism in Sudan" (70). Caminero-Santagelo's interpretation found in his 2005 book represents the most recent critical approaches to *Season.* These approaches begin to restore historical specificity to their analyses and seek to highlight the transnational Arabic context of *Season's* publication.

Transnational Arabic Formations

It is important to recognize and interpret the significance of place to this novel if only to acknowledge the importance accorded to place by its author. A few critics have recognized the author's attention to issues of place and locality. The earliest critical work to situate the novel within a transnational Arabic context is a 1979 dissertation entitled *The Roots of Consciousness of El Tayeb Salih* by Constance Berkley. Berkley introduces Salih's work in the context of the nationalist history of Sudan and its Afro-Arab inheritance. While Berkley usefully contextualizes Salih's work within broader Sudanese literature and culture, I look more critically at the deployment of specific figures of Sudanese history, figures such as the slave and the nomad that I argue are central to that history and central to the novel as well.

More recently scholars have again worked to place the novel in relation to place. For example, in his historical overview of the development of Sudanese literature, Eiman el-Nour mentions the "significant role" that Wad Hamid plays in *Season of Migration to the North* (161). Denys Johnson-Davies, *Season's* esteemed translator claimed the picture of the village of Wad Hamid as Salih's "real and, one hopes, continuing achievement" (1981). More recently, Wail Hassan coined the phrase "Wad Hamid Cycle" to refer to

Salih's oeuvre as a cohesive whole. The phrase "Wad Hamid Cycle" emphasizes the linkages and continuities among Salih's sketches, short stories and novels, including Season, which all take place in the fictional village of Wad Hamid in Northern Sudan (Tayeb 15).[13] In elaborating further on his choice of phrase, Hassan finds analogies to Wad Hamid in Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, Garcia Marquez's Macando and Mahfouz's Cairo (15). Hassan's phrase should do more for us than highlight the cohesiveness of Salih's corpus and its analogousness to European models; rather, his choice of name expresses the significance of locality to Salih's literary project. In one interview, Salih himself asserts about his own work, "The place is therefore the thing for me." He elaborates:

> [a]bove all else, the foundation of my work, for what it is worth, lies in what I am: a Sudanese Muslim Arab who was born at a certain time, in a certain place. I grew up in a biggish village in the North of the Sudan, halfway between Wadi Halfa and Khartoum. It is almost in the middle between the land of the Shaigiya Arabs and the Nubians. It is also an extension of Diya al-Kababish, which is an Arab Bedouin nomadic tribe numbering over two million, and I believe it represents the greatest concentration of Bedouins anywhere in the Arab world. (Amyuni 16)

In recent years, postcolonial critics have shifted their attention away from the narrow boundaries of the colonial encounter and have instead refocused their attention on the way postcolonial literature illuminates the internal contradictions of the colony-turned-nation. Although *Season* criticism has not yet fully attended to Sudan as a specific locality, it has turned to the transnational Arabic context in two ways that echo their approaches to the context of British colonialism: first, critics have examined *Season's* participation in intertextual conversations with other Arabic texts; second, critics have

labored to re-connect the novel to historical and current events transpiring in the broader regional context.

Just as some critics have explicated the way Salih subverts and undermines the colonialist premises of canonical European texts, others have also explored the ways *Season* reproduces and revises narrative tropes from earlier Arabic novels. In his chapter on *Season,* Wail Hassan examines what he calls Salih's "hidden polemic" (*Tayeb* 84) against earlier Arab novelists, and specifically, their reliance on the debates that shaped the *Nahda* movement.[14] Confronted with the corruption and decay of the late Ottoman Empire, and the looming threat of European imperialism in the early nineteenth century, Arab intellectuals developed a complex series of responses that later became known as the *Nahda,* or "rebirth," which argued that a revitalized Arab public sphere could be effected through a selective synthesis (*tawfiq*) of Western modernity (specifically technology and modern institutions) and Arab Islamic heritage and tradition. Hassan discusses the way Arab novelists employ the story of love between a male student from the colonies and a European woman to thematize the attempt at synthesis of West and East, modernity and tradition. Focusing on the work of three novelists in particular -- *'Usfur min al-sharq* (A Bird from the East) by Tawfiq al-Hakim, *Qindil Umm Hashim* (The Lamp of Umm Hashim) by Yahya Haqqi and *Al-Hayy al-Latini* (The Latin Quarter) by Suhayl Idris – Hassan discusses the authors' entwinement of the discourse of love and *nahda* and Salih's redeployment and unraveling of these discourses. According to Hassan, Salih's polemic amounts to an assault on the ideology of *nahda* that underpins the texts by al-Hakim, Haqqi and Idris (84 – 85).[15]

The regional context has been important to *Season* from its first publication date. Salih first found an outlet for a serialized version of *Mawsim* in the literary magazine *Hiwar* ('Dialogue'), edited by his colleague and friend, poet Tawfiq Sayigh, and published in the Beirut of the 1960s. Eventually, leftist Arab intellectuals began to suspect that an organization called "The Conference for Cultural Freedom," which financed both *Hiwar* and the London-based magazine Encounter, was covertly funded by the CIA. *Hiwar* fell into disrepute among the Arab left, many of whom ignored or disregarded Salih's novel due to its tainted association. On the other hand, Salih recalls that members of emerging Islamist movements in both Sudan and Egypt condemned *Mawsim* for its "decadent" and "pornographic" style. Even still, a number of members of academe and the media intelligentsia in Egypt and Lebanon wrote positive reviews of *Mawsim* as soon as it appeared in *Hiwar.* Writing soon after the publication of *Season* in Beirut, Raja Naqqash published an article in *al-Musawwar* titled "The New Genius in the Realm of the Arabic Novel," and Muhammadiya titled his 1974 collection on Salih *Tayeb Salih: The Genius of the Arabic Novel* (for both, see Muhammadiya). From the beginning, then, the primary interlocuters of the novel were from the Arabic sphere, and the novel traversed a terrain not delimited by the borders of the Sudanese nation-state, but instead drawn from a cosmopolitan and transnational Arabic formation.

Critics have developed compelling readings contextualizing *Season*'s narrative within patterns of regional history and politics, a connection also acknowledged by the author. In his introduction to the 2003 Penguin edition of the novel, Salih himself cites

the importance of the crisis of Palestine and the war of 1967 to the public reassessment of the novel. Salih writes:

> In 1967 the crushing military defeat inflicted by Israel took place. It shook many things, among them faith in current political ideologies. More and more people started to question and to express their doubts openly. For some reason my work became incorporated into this process of intellectual questioning. People began to see in the novel certain things they had not seen before or did not care to see. The underlying sense of desperation and gloom in the novel seems to have coincided with the general mood of despondency in the Arab intelligentsia everywhere, especially in Egypt (vii)[16]

As Salih suggests here, the horizon of historical change and shifting geopolitical configurations impacts the reception of the literary work. What was not visible, to use Salih's idiom, to certain readers of *Mawsim* before 1967 was made visible post-1967. In a post-1967 world order, interpreters increasingly aligned the novel with a felt crisis of Arab modernity, and this alignment promoted the novel's profile among the intelligentsia.

In their recent critical essays on the novel, Makdisi and Hassan yoke *Season*'s narrative drama to the general historical crisis of Arab modernity and to the momentous occasion of the war of 1967. Following up on Salih's speculations of a connection between the narrative and the war, Hassan reminds us that the overt violence depicted in Season is "contrary to all literary conventions and decorum which have prevailed in Arabic literature throughout its history" (*Tayeb* 116) and suggests that Salih's work derives its power in part from the way he "literalizes discursive, epistemic, and psychological violence" (117). He then explains the presence of violence in *Season* as a "symptom of a severe social, cultural, or historical malaise," singling out the Palestinian

predicament as formative, suggesting Salih's forecasting of the devastating defeat of 1967.

Although the defeat of 1967 is singled out, both Makdisi and Hassan agree that the defeat is actually symptomatic of the failure of Arab unity. In this sense, Makdisi and Hassan suggest that the novel's central contribution is its interrogation of the assumptions of *Nahda*: assumptions that posited a binary of Arab traditionalism and Western modernity. Relative to this paradigm, Makdisi argues that the novel:

> [P]oints away from the traditionalism of the Arab past – as well as from the future that imperial Europe, through the ideology of modernity, once held out to its victims – and in an entirely new direction, finally escaping the narrow and tightly defined orbit of the debates surrounding the *Nahda*. Through this double negation, it offers tremendous liberating potential, allowing entirely new conceptualizations of social realities, and drawing an entirely new map of the present ("Empire" 817)

Hassan, too, argues that the novel "predicts the failure of that vision" [the vision of the *Nahda*] (88), reveals the "bankruptcy of the present and suggests that a correct conceptualization of it lies not in the claims of Western modernity and its Arab champions, nor in those of the traditionalists, but in an often painful and difficult negotiation between old and new, north and south, that erases the discursive boundaries within which each has been construed as a timeless essence" (*Tayeb* 88). According to Hassan, the novel relentlessly challenges essential categories, revealing "tradition" and "modernity" as well as categories of race and gender as artificial constructs.

Gender

Hassan has also pushed the boundaries of critical commentary on *Season* in the realm of gender analysis; in his article "Gender (and) Imperialism: Structures of

Masculinity in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*" (2003), he offers the first sustained analysis of masculinity in *Season.* In his article, Hassan interrogates the construction of colonized masculinity in the novel, revealing the novel's commentary on the interdependency of colonial and patriarchal epistemologies as well as its critique of colonial and patriarchal conceptions of gender. In his own words, Hassan proposes to read the novel "as a critique [of] the gender paradigm that normalizes colonial and patriarchal hegemony" (310). Focusing on the figure of Sa'eed, he draws on Frantz Fanon and Judith Butler's appropriation of Lacan to develop an analysis of the novel's unraveling of the tenets of a postcolonial masculinity complicit in the oppressive mechanisms of neocolonial rule (320 – 321). Hassan reads Mustafa as a "metaphor for colonial violence" (311) and interprets his subjectivity as a product, historically and psychologically, of colonialism. Hassan highlights Sa'eed's ambivalent vacillation between his feminization as a member of the colonized and his hypermasculinization as an African man.

Prior to Hassan's intervention, critics pursued a feminist analysis that focused on the women, or the treatment of the feminine, in the novel. Ni'ma focused her analysis on the gendered images of Victorian imperialism that surround and taunt Sa'eed (237). Some critics focused on the European women and sought to elaborate the seamlessness of colonialist, anti-colonialist and nationalist misogyny, while others focused on the depictions of violence perpetrated on Sudanese women by an indigenous patriarchy buttressed by "tradition" and colonialism. Many critics, such as Evelyne Accad in her 1985 essay "Sexual Politics: Women in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*,"

suggested that the novel's unique structure linked the status of women under patriarchy in the West to the oppressive patriarchies in colonized societies.

All of these critics' readings contribute to our understanding of the gender ideologies contested in the novel, but they do not ground their insights in in-depth historical detail. I extend these critics' insights to account for Sa'eed's *difference* in comparison to other masculinities in the novel and within the village of Wad Hamid. Briefly, I plan to restore an historical dimension to the analysis of Sa'eed's abject and injured masculinity.

Conclusion of Literature Review

As *Season* (as a sample of world literature) becomes ever more fully incorporated into the international systems of trade, conflict, commerce and goods, I would like to ask what would happen to our understandings of the novel if we turn our attention and interpretive faculties more fully back to the space we call "Sudan."

For even as Salih's work is repeatedly claimed as part of a Pan-Arab literary canon, his birth nation, Sudan, has been cited for its "multiple marginalities" in relation to any particular regional configuration.[17] In his acceptance speech for his 2005 award, Salih commented that he "could not shun an honour coming from Egypt" slyly alluding to Sudan's historical status as Egypt's colony (Al Ahram 2005). Further, echoing Ali Mazrui's 1968 exposition of Sudan's "multiple marginalities," he emphasized Sudan's marginality to both the Arab world and the African world, suggesting the benefits of this marginality to the task of writing.[18]

While the approaches to the book differ in terms of their area of emphasis, they share an undervaluation of the historical specificity of Sudan and certain assumptions

regarding Mustafa Sa'eed. I argue that, in fact, these two pieces are related. In other words, recognizing the elements of Sa'eed's characterization that distances him from the hegemony of the village requires placing him in a Sudanese context. Some of the scholarly approaches we have examined above take this step, but I extend the investigation by tightening the focus onto the figures of the slave and the nomad who I argue are central to the history of Sudan, to the novel and to Sa'eed.

In previous scholarship, Sa'eed is described as a figure of mystery, as an elusive character devoid of actual historical or genealogical ties, but this is then explained by way of his role as phantasm, as doppelganger, or as a figment of the narrator's imagination, For example, in his brief account of the novel, critic Roger Allen writes:

> The novel unfolds through the intertwined stories of narrator and hero and, as a whole host of cultural complexes emerge, we are left with the tantalizing question as to whether the figure of Mustafa Sa'eed, presented to us by the narrator may in fact be a part of the latter's own psyche (205).

Allen's interpretation echoes the narrator who not only thinks he sees Sa'eed's reflection when he gazes in a mirror but also confides to his audience: "Occasionally the disturbing thought occurs to me that Mustafa Sa'eed never happened, that he was in fact a lie, a phantom, a dream or a nightmare that had come to the people of that village one suffocatingly dark night, and when they opened their eyes to the sunlight he was nowhere to be seen" (46). Allen rightfully directs us to the narrator's fraught relationship with Sa'eed, but in accepting the narrator's own anxious questioning of Sa'eed's material existence, fails to acknowledge other potential interpretations of their conflicted encounter.

Other critics have seized on Sa'eed's "orphan" status and exclude any mention of his parents or of the cultural assumptions inhering in the concept of orphanhood. Critic Mona Amyuni writes: "An orphan from birth, Sa'eed is the prototype of the Stranger who belongs nowhere" (10) while Nasr states: "He [Sa'eed] is an orphan who has no relatives or friends" (95). Wail Hassan does take the step to point out briefly that Sa'eed's ancestry echoes "social stigma and [] treason" (Tayeb 91), an insight I contend deserves further attention. I am interested in subjecting Sa'eed's identity as "stranger" to a more culturally specific analysis. In the Arabic text, Sa'eed tells the narrator, "I grew up an orphan [nashaatu yateeman], my father having died several months before I was born" (Salih 24), while the English translation reads, "As you can see, I was born in Khartoum and grew up without a father, he having died several months before I was born" (19). I suggest that the Arabic version's explicit referencing of Mustafa Sa'eed's orphan-hood is important insofar as it reveals the cultural assumptions inhering in ideas of illegitimacy. Both versions explicitly mention the absence of the father, but it is only the Arabic text that employs the term orphan to define Sa'eed's status. The employment of the term orphan indicates the overriding importance of the father's presence and patrilineal ties in defining one's social identity. According to Fluehr-Lobban, "The social repercussions of illegitimacy are profound and so far-reaching as to haunt the mother, her family and the child for their entire lives (*Islamic Societies* 109). Sa'eed resides with his mother until his departure for Egypt; however, his mother's presence does not erase the stigma of the absent father, of the lack of attachment to a patrilineage. The lack of patrilineage is synonomous in Islamic family law to the lack of a genealogy, or *nasab.* According to

Fluehr-Lobban, "to be without attachment to a patrilineage or a genealogy, [] is one of the worst conditions that can befall a Muslim," and is "virtually not to exist" (*Islamic Societies* 109). Unlike a woman, who only inherits patrilineal descent but does not have the responsibility of conveying it, a man both inherits and conveys this form of recognizable social identity. Bereft of *nasab,* and *'asaba,* Mustafa Sa'eed exists as a liminal figure within the framework of his social structure. In order to convey descent, Mustafa Sa'eed, like a woman, must marry into a family and adopt their patrilineality; however, his lack of *nasab* and his status as stranger threaten the stability of his marriage, an argument I will elaborate on later in this chapter. For now, I argue that it is his dislocated position vis a vis the expectations and privileges of a patrilineage that contributes to Sa'eed's persona as "prototype of a Stranger" (Amyuni 10), and illuminates the social conditions of his phantomality noted by the narrator and echoed by Roger Allen. Moreover, even if we restore the mother as a fully legitimate and recognizable parent, her reputed identity as former slave only further stigmatizes Sa'eed. Indeed, the prototype of the kinless individual devoid of genealogy – the stranger among neighbors -- in Sudan is the slave.

The story of Mustafa Sa'eed's "migration North" is not simply the story of one individual's journey, but rather a condensed genealogy that structures individual identity and narrative. At least part of Sa'eed's story is one of assimilation, assimilation into an *'asaba* (the core group of patrilineally related males), into an extended family, into a village, into the north of Sudan, and into the dominant center of the nation. But Sa'eed's striving to marry into the village of Wad Hamid may also be understood as an anxious

assimilation. His assimilation mitigates his stigmatized position as "kinless" and as detached individual, and confirms nasab (genealogy) and the institution of *'asaba* as essential to the reproduction of other social institutions. But the anxious and unstable nature of the assimilation also necessarily reveals Sa'eed's marginal positioning.

In examining Sa'eed's dislocation and alienation, critics have emphasized their psychological dimensions, their status as colonial conditions, but have downplayed their economic and historical dimensions. For example, in his essay comparing *Season* with Ayi Kwei Armah's novel *Why are We So Blest?* Frank Birbalsingh states unequivocally "The main interest of *Season* and *Why are We So Blest?* is their exploration of the mental and psychological rather than political or economic aspects of their theme" (66).[19] I argue that Mustafa Sa'eed's relationships with kin and non-kin are brought into greater relief when we reflect on his occupation as economist. Mustafa Sa'eed's migration to and settlement in the village accords him a proximity to a particular social landscape; his marriage into a prominent family accords him certain privileges but also requires that he conceal aspects of his background. I suggest that Sa'eed's professional preoccupations and the way his personal relationships revolve around informal and formal contracts, point to the text's underlying themes of the breakdown, commodification, – and persistence – of inherited ties. Ultimately, Sa'eed's "multiple marginality" serves to both consolidate the hegemonic version of village history and to destabilize that history as the sole truth. Told at a particularly volatile moment in Sudanese history, the story of Mustafa Sa'eed has resonance in a society in transition in 1966.

Kin and Commodity: Negotiating Mustafa Sa'eed's Position in *Season of Migration to the North*

History: Integrating Sudan

Shortly after the narrator returns to his village, but before his first personal meeting with Mustafa Sa'eed, he has a conversation with his grandfather. The narrator makes an unexpected association as his grandfather recalls times past:

> My grandfather was talking to me of a tyrant who had ruled over the district in the days of the Turks. I do not know what it was that brought Mustafa to mind but suddenly I remembered him and said to myself that I'd ask my grandfather about him, for he was very knowledgeable about the genealogy of everyone in the village and even of people scattered up and down the river (6).

The narrator admits to being confused by his involuntary association of Mustafa and "the Turks", certainly a signal that we should inquire into the function and meaning of this misrecognition. Although the narrator does not dwell upon the thought, the connection between Mustafa Sa'eed and the "days of the Turks" is resonant and suggestive. "The days of the Turks" translates as "Turkiyya", an Arabic term referring to the Turco-Egyptian imperial regime ruling Sudan from 1821 – 1881. Sudan was formally ruled by a a governor in Egypt, but Egypt itself was still part of the Ottoman Empire. In Sudan's popular imagination, the Ottoman Empire, or Turkiyya, became paradigmatic of foreign rule and the Turk became emblematic of all "outsiders." Thus, when the British administration took control in 1898, their representatives were called "Turks" and the government "Turkiyya" by locals. The use of the word "Turk" in the passage above opens the way for slippage between "Turk" and "Westerner," shuttling between two eras

of colonial rule. The narrator's recollection of Sa'eed as he references the "Turkiyya" condenses a history of Ottoman rule, long debates over slavery and reform, and Westernization and then projects that history onto the elusive figure. The figure of Sa'eed and his fractured ancestry, I suggest, becomes a nodal point for exploring the contestations and contradictions of the integration of Sudan as a modern nation-state.

Long described by historians as the time when the first centralized state was established in Khartoum, the Turkiyya is identified as the era when the outlines of Sudan as a modern nation-state first emerged.[20] With the emergence of an ever-more centralizing state, new bureaucratic structures and new modes of law and order, the Turkiyya was a time of great upheaval and changes in social organization. Conventional analyses of the Turkiyya emphasize the unifying effect of a hegemonic Islam and central state upon Sudanese society, and have downplayed the divisive effects of an exploitative economic structure and the imposition of a state-sanctioned, orthodox and hierarchical Islam.[21] More recent historical investigations highlight the ways economic change and colonial violence fractured communities, introduced new patriarchal social relations and destroyed existing communal modes of production. Carolyn Fleuhr-Lobban echoes other scholars when she cites the Ottoman occupation for "its harsh rule and strictly commercial interest in the country" (*Islamic Law* 85). Furthermore, the process by which geographic divisions of "South" and "North" were created and by which religious, ethnic, and economic meanings were ascribed to these geographies, began during the Turkiyya, and then continued throughout the late 19th and into the 20th centuries.

In fact, it is precisely in the pre-colonial Sudanic states and the Ottoman Empire that Sudanese and Sudanists have looked for clues to the persistent conflicts in contemporary Sudan, conflicts that have been articulated frequently in terms of "South" and "North." In the most careful analysis to date of the civil wars, Douglas Johnson argues that identity patterns and labels carry such different meanings today than they did in the 16th – 19th centuries, that we "cannot attribute the origins of the current civil war to earlier forms of racial confrontation" (*Root Causes* 4). Having cautioned us thus, he goes on to propose that "we can, however, seek to understand it [the civil wars] by reference to analogous patterns of free and servile status within a series of expanding, centralizing Sudanic states" (4). Mustafa Sa'eed's parents – the slave and the nomad – represent the geographical extremes of "South" and "North" and also symbolize conceptions of servility and freedom. Successive regimes, including the Ottoman, the Mahdist, the Anglo-Egyptian, and the postcolonial, have been forced to contend with rebellious, state-defying slaves and nomads in order to successfully carry out their vision of a unified nation that would serve an integrating world economy.[22]

It is an understanding of the "South" as a commercial zone for slaves and ivory that both integrated it into the capitalist market and separated it as a wild and exploitable territory (Johnson *Root Causes* 4 – 5; Hale *Gender* 64 - 66). In his monograph on the Bahr al-Ghazal province, Sikainga argues that this part of the South was decisively shaped by the "integration into the trans-Saharan trade and the southward military and commercial expansion of Egypt in the nineteenth century" (*Western* 1). Prior to the Turkiyya, there existed geographic divisions between North and South, and these

divisions were strengthened by Muslim "ideologies of the frontier" justifying enslavement of non-Muslim populations (Sikainga *Slavery* 7 – 10). The South was positioned as *dar al-kufr*, or the abode of unbelief, the ideological opposite of *dar al-Islam*, or those territories under Muslim control where Islamic law, or Shari'a, is applied (see Abou el Fadl 142). Even in the pre-modern period, the dichotomous language of "dar al-kufr" and "dar al-Islam" veiled a much more complex historical reality where the presence of an Islamic polity did not always signify for every jurist the ethical application of Shari'a (Abou el Fadl 142). Thus, looked at historically, we may conjecture that Muhammad Ali opportunistically manipulated the theoretical categories of "dar al-kufr" and "dar al-Islam" both to motivate his forces and justify the raiding and slaving that would sustain his economy. Those residing outside the confines of what was designated *dar al-Islam,* such as communities in the South, or those within its boundaries who did not submit to official Ottoman authority who defined the Islamic polity, such as nomads, became targets of war and enslavement (Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh 38; also see Khaled Masud 37). *Hijra* in this context entailed movement away from dar al-kufr, and movement towards the sanctioned centers of Muslim authority and toward restoration of territories to *dar al-Islam*; these movements relied on old, but also produced new, ideological distinctions between belief and unbelief, Islamic center and periphery, Islamic civilization and frontiers (see Eickelman 5; Sikainga *Slaves* 7 – 10).

Prior to the Ottoman era, ruling elites from the Funj and Fur kingdoms relied on these ideologies in order to obtain slaves from among non-Muslim groups from their southern hinterland. But slaving became widespread and institutionalized only during the

Turkiyya, which "represented the first large-scale effort to draw the Nilotic regions into the expanding capitalist economy" (Sikainga *Western* 2). According to several historians, it was Muhammad Ali's need for slaves for his expanding army that drove his conquest of Sudan in 1821. Janet Ewald argues that soldiers, and not traders, led the way in producing slaves during the first two decades of the Turkiyya (165). As infrastructure was built and the Nilotic regions became accessible, traders took the lead to the southern frontiers, and European, Middle Eastern and northern Sudanese merchants (known as Khartoumers, or Bahara) hurried to the South, set up zaribas and traded ostrich feathers, beads and finally cattle, for ivory and later, slaves (Sikainga 3, also see Ewald 160 – 166, 171).

Slaves were only one essential product in a complex, globalizing economy. State-building in Sudan was indeed dependent on integrating multiple peripheries, which led to the disruption of customary arrangements. According to Y. Hakan Erdem in the book *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise 1800 – 1909,* the Egyptian occupation of Sudan in 1820 – 21 led to large numbers of slaves flooding the Egyptian market (57), but as Sondra Hale makes clear, slaving is tied to other contemporaneous forms of predatory capitalism:

> Through slaving, ivory hunting, and gold mining, the Turco-Egyptian regime began disrupting and destroying social life, production, and settlement in selected areas ever farther from the Nile as it sought to construct an export-oriented, dependent, and colonialized economy (*Gender* 65).[23]

This "export-oriented" economy of course required the deterritorialization and exportation of slaves from the South to points northward, including Egypt but also including Northern Sudan. Remembered as "the time when the world was spoiled" by

many Dinka (Deng Dinka 73), the violent intrusion of Muhammad Ali's armies and the resulting amplification of the trades in slaves and ivory forced many communities to restructure, and for the first time in Dinka political history women were elected to take the place of male chiefs (who were killed, exiled or imprisoned) (Beswick "Women" 63). Innumerable southern men were impressed into the Egyptian army, while others were forced into labor in Northern Sudan, while captured women were regularly appropriated into domestic service. Ideologies of "servile" and "free" served to consolidate the interests of the centralizing state, inexorably moving people from periphery to center, and inventing them anew as subject peoples. Although the Turkish invasion affected both the North and South of Sudan, it is the South that was most traumatically changed, and it was southern men who were most visible in the North.[24] Local communities formerly organized around kin-based systems of production, distribution and law and order were ruptured, coming under the force of a foreign government for the first time. Eventually, there were large groups of "kinless" men, deracinated, at times enslaved, and considered social outsiders, in the center (Marmon 19). Once members of coherent communities in the South, these men now articulated their identities through their relationships to the state and its apparatuses – the military, the legal courts in their bid for manumission, state development projects. Christianity became another avenue for the re-articulation of identity; as Sikainga notes, "Liberated slaves in Khartoum became a major source of converts for European Christian missionaries who arrived in the Sudan in the early 1840s" (*Slaves* 26).[25]

Although the interference of the Turkiyya had the most dramatic effect on southern communities, resulting in forced migrations, reconfigured geographic boundaries and the new identity of kinless individual and slave at the nation's center, other social groups were affected as well, including the Beja of Northeastern Sudan. Salih chose as Sa'eed's paternal lineage the 'Ababda, a subgroup of the Beja, a pastoral nomadic tribe inhabiting a borderland between what is now Upper Egypt and northern Sudan, having moved there during the early medieval period. Like the southerner and slave, the Beja have maintained an ambivalent relationship to state authority, but have gradually and unevenly integrated into the center. Historical record traces the Beja to a Hamitic origin (Paul 20 – 21), and evidence suggests they followed matrilineal systems of succession until their eventual adoption of Arab cultural values, including patrilineality (Fadl Hasan *Arabs* 139). From the 7th century on, Arab migration became increasingly tied to the transmission of Islam, and Qur'anic texts introduced new normative frameworks by which to judge nomadic groups. Islamic law scholar Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh notes that numerous verses in the Qur'an display a profound distrust of nomads, "these eternal migrants without fixed domicile who, after declaring their allegiance to Muhammad, returned to the desert (*ta'rib*) to escape from his control in a critical moment when the new community was in need of warriors for defense and expansion" (38). Perceived as unpredictable and always potentially traitorous, nomadic groups were thus viewed with suspicion, outside of the *umma,* and legitimate targets of war.[26] Nomadic groups in Sudan were doubly marginalized, located as they were on the periphery of the expanding Muslim world. However, as Arab hegemony grew, the bulk of the Beja were

converted to Islam and, according to A. Paul and Fadl Hasan, those in leadership positions rewrote genealogies to buttress their status and reflect lineages traced back to the Prophet (*History of the Beja* 64 – 79; *The Arabs* 139). Still, the image of Beja disloyalty and inconstancy followed them in future depictions and, I argue, is part of the image of Mustafa Sa'eed.[27]

Traditionally, members of Beja subgroups formed allegiances primarily to their specific kin group, and although there were shared Beja institutions and customs, the Beja acted as individual tribes and clans (Voll 11).[28] Each group had a specific role to play within local economies but until the Ottoman era there was no central state to which the groups were compelled to submit. But with new external pressure and internal shifts, some of the smaller tribes living across important borders and boundaries began to be incorporated into regional economies. The 'Ababda, for example, dominated the trade routes across the Nubian Desert, and so were indispensable as guides and messengers before the construction of the railway (Moore-Harrell 121). Prior to the Ottoman occupation, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt traveled through Sudan and recorded his observations of the 'Ababda. Passing a caravan of eight 'Ababda escorting thirty slaves, Burckhardt described the 'Ababda thus:

> The Ababda occupy country south of Kosseir, nearly as far as the latitude of Derr. They act as guides to the Sennar caravans which depart from Darraou, and were former conductors of the trade from Kosseir to Kerne. They are known in Upper Egypt for their excellent breed of camels, particularly dromedaries, [they] have few horses and when at war with other Arab tribes, fight upon camels, armed with a target, lance, and sword. (qtd in Udal 137).

According to A. Paul, the Beja subgroups as we know them today emerged in the 16th century, consolidating in their resistance against the attempts of the precolonial Funj

kingdom to extend its influence into the Red Sea hills (93). For the most part, the Beja avoided submitting to state power, but in 1821, Muhammad Ali's armies destroyed the Funj kingdom and were poised to occupy and govern the entire Sudan, becoming the first imperial power in the region (98).

In order to facilitate the conquering of territories and the governing that followed, the Ottoman administrators sought to control and manipulate traditional kinship and political structures, an interference which changed the basis for masculine authority and created the conditions for newly legitimated masculinities to emerge. The Beja elite began to identify with and adapt themselves to the newly emerging dominant power structure in the secular political realm. Whereas Turkish authorities enslaved southern peoples in the service of capitalist development, prevailing ideologies described earlier prevented the Ottomans from enslaving the Muslim Beja and so the extent of the fracturing and separation of families was limited in the North as compared to the South. Still, Ottoman interference strained relational ties as the administrators nurtured special alliances with particular tribes or even individual men, inflating and distorting the basis for their authority.[29] For example, in planning the invasion of Sudan across the dangerous and ill-defined northern border, the Turkiyya recognized the usefulness of having the 'Ababda as guides, and enlisted them as part of their administration. At one time informal and undocumented, the 'Ababda's work on the caravan routes became officially recognized, and specially prized, by the administration. As historian Moore-Harrell writes:

> As a reward for their support of the Turco-Egyptian conquering forces, the new authorities awarded them a concession to continue their control of that route. This

> enabled them to collect a tax of 10 per cent of the value of the goods that were transported from the Sudan to Egypt across their territory. In return, the 'Ababda had to provide camels for the caravans, navigate, lead and protect them. This arrangement continued under Gordon, by which time the 'Ababda had expanded their activities to the west, from Omdurman toward al-Obeid (121).[30]

In charge of most of the routes throughout Northern and Central Sudan, the Beja made most of their income transporting government and trade goods, and served as not only traders and guides but also as postmen to remote areas of the Northern and Eastern Sudan (Moore-Harrell 143). After the Turkish occupation of Suakin, a port city on the Red Sea coast of Sudan, the Beja mixed with visitors pursuing commercial enterprise, and became directly involved with the slave trade as well (Paul 66). In his book *Travels in Nubia,* Burckhardt notes that during the Ottoman period, Suakin hosted a "thriving trade in slaves, horses, grain, butter, a little gold, ostrich feathers and hide" and estimates that "two to three thousand head of slaves left the port every year" (396).

The Beja were integrated into the administration and enabled the Turkiyya to cut costs; they also facilitated the slave trade. In other words, the Beja were essential to the indirect administration of Sudan, and particularly the Northeastern provinces. For a long time Muhammad Ali left the Beja territories undisturbed, and it was only in 1833 that he sent a French engineer to investigate the potential for mineral resource development in the area (Paul 99). Commenting on their almost complete evasion of Ottoman administrative control, the engineer represents the Beja as existing on the fringes of the civilized world, an echoing of earlier Quran'ic and then medieval depictions (Paul 99). In the context of a newly centralizing state attempting to order itself, the rhetorical figure of

the savage pastoralist became a newly useful one for the justification of more state discipline and regulation.

The same year as the French engineer's visit to Atbai, the governor-general Ali Khurshid Pasha decided to do something about the Beja's evasion of the state, and initiated a tax-gathering expedition among them. Although they escaped many of the trappings of government, the Beja could not escape the tax-gatherer who, from their perspective, "loot[ed] in the name of the state" (Paul 101). Resisting this latest attempt to control their autonomy, the Beja rebelled and the rebellions were violently suppressed:

> Scores of Beja were wantonly slaughtered and mutilated, wells were filled in, cattle maimed or driven away in herds. Men were killed for the Pasha's amusement, and one of his officers admitted that he practiced swordmanship by trying to cut captives in half with one blow. Even the jealously guarded Beja women were handed to the Bashi-bazouks, and when the Pasha returned to Khartoum he took with him forty of the tribal notables to be hanged in the marketplace (Paul 100 – 101).

The violent measures of the counterinsurgency successfully quelled Beja revolts against the occupying power, but direct government control in the area was kept to a minimum (Paul 101). Still, the tax-collector remained a fixed presence and symbol of Ottoman corruption and oppression and it was in part the perceived injustices tied to looting and the collection of taxes that led to a groundswell of Beja support for the Mahdist revolt against the Ottomans.[31]

Dominant nationalist Sudanese history describes the Mahdi as Abu'l-Istiqlal as "The Father of Independence" in that he "united the tribes of the Sudan by an Islamic ideology, drove out the alien rulers [the Ottomans], and laid the foundations of a nation-state" (Holt 87), but much revisionist contemporary scholarship also acknowledges the

stratification and conflict introduced with Mahdist rule. According to Sikainga and Hale, support for the Mahdist state (1885 – 1898) came from those who were disaffected and struggling financially under the Ottomans (Sikainga *Slaves* 29; see also Hale 67). Sikainga also suggests that the support for the Mahdists derived from their promise to free slaves. United in their opposition to the Khatmis, the order patronized by the Ottomans, these marginalized groups formed "a modestly integrated Islamic state" (Hale 68). Like many groups, the Beja were internally divided on their stance toward the Mahdi, some deciding to join his movement as soldiers and others pledging loyalty to the Khatmis who supported the Ottomans and were patronized by them (Lobban 33).

Salih references the internal conflicts introduced during the Mahdist era and the lingering dependence of some of the Beja (in particular, the 'Ababda) on their Ottoman patrons, when he introduces the rumors circulating about Sa'eed's paternal lineage. Responding to the narrator's inquiries about Sa'eed, a Sudanese civil servant comments: "His [Sa'eed's] father was from the 'Ababda, the tribe living between Egypt and Sudan. It was they who helped Slatin Pasha escape when he was the prisoner of the Khalifa el-Ta'aishi" (54). The Khalifa was the Mahdi's successor, whose tribe, the Ta'aisha, is described by historian P.M. Holt as "unimportant" until they became "an instrument of domination" manipulated by the Khalifa to secure his rule (7). By facilitating the escape of Slatin Pasha, the 'Ababda announced their continuing loyalty to Ottoman rule and, in effect, marked themselves as outside the nation as defined by the Mahdists.

But, in many ways, Mahdist policies differed little from the policies of the Ottoman era. The Mahdist period deepened the fractures between "North" and "South"

begun during the Turkiyya, and Hale stresses the economic stratification of the Mahdist period, calling the Mahdist economy under the Khalifa "semifeudal" (68). She writes: "The new class system that emerged continued, albeit in another form, the exploitation of the hinterland peasantry and the extraction of raw materials for a European market" (68). The Khalifa resumed and strengthened the slave trade and according to Sikainga, the "major beneficiaries of slavery [were] the Mahdist state, members of the Mahdi's and the Khalifa's families, and leading emirs" (*Slaves* 31). Among the Khalifa's strategies for strengthening the slave trade was the drafting of runaway slaves into the Mahdist army, slave raids in the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal regions, and the solicitation of religious opinion from qadis justifying slavery (*Slaves* 30). The Khalifa also began a policy of settling slaves (both military and domestic) in specific quarters of the city of Omdurman, a policy that continues to shape the ethnic and spatial composition of the city today (Sikainga *Slaves* 33 – 34).

At the end of Mahdist rule, the Beja were devastated and in disarray. Paul describes in excruciating detail the conditions of the Beja at the cusp of the British re-occupation:

> The Hadendowa, the tribe most heavily involved on the Dervish side, had been thinned by famine, disease and war, yet even so had managed to consolidate its hold on the Gash and the middle Atbara. The Amarar were in a state of disintegration, and only the Fadlab sections preserved any sense of tribal unity. The rift between the Atbai and Atbara Besharin was widened. The Beni Amer, protected to some extent by Abyssinian and Italian victories, yet suffered heavy losses and serious tribal derangement, and lesser tribes like the Melhitkinab and Hamran were all but exterminated. Thousands had been killed in war, in battle against the British, or by the Dervishes who harried unmercifully all those who showed the slightest half-heartedness in their cause, and even more had perished from want and hunger in the terrible famines of which that of the year 1887 was the worst. Few of the great tribal leaders survived, it being the Khalifa's policy

> that they should not: and throughout the Beja country there was everywhere war weariness and disillusionment. (Paul 117 – 118)

According to Paul, "The Beja had suffered heavily both as allies and opponents of Dervish rule" (117), and having been divided internally, they were vulnerable to external onslaughts.[32] Some were particularly vulnerable to the hope offered by the British invasion, publicized and memorialized as the "Re-conquest" – firmly attaching it to the previous imperial era of the Ottomans.[33]

Paul goes so far as to describe the history of Anglo-Egyptian rule (1898 – 1956) among the Beja as the history of the domestication of the Beja by the British (120), but it is important to understand that this objective was not new, but rather an extension of the aims of the Ottoman administration. Significantly, Salih references the seamlessness of the Ottoman and Anglo-Egyptian eras in his characterization, again, of Sa'eed's father: "His [Sa'eed's] father was from the 'Ababda, the tribe living between Egypt and the Sudan. It was they who helped Slatin Pasha escape when he was the prisoner of the Khalifa el-Ta'aishi, after which they worked for Kitchener's army when he reconquered Sudan" (54). Slatin Pasha (1857 – 1932), an Austrian officer who served in the Turkiyya, was a prisoner of the Mahdi (and after him, the Khalifa) for eleven years, a period he writes about in his captivity narrative *Fire and Sword in Sudan* (1896).

Upon his release, Slatin was named inspector-general of the Anglo-Egyptian regime, illustrating the seamlessness of the two eras. In an official record by a member of the Ango-Egyptian Sudan Political Service, the 'Ababda are described as willing conscripts to colonial military and the police force and as having "provided the bulk of the irregular forces which served under Lord Kitchener" during the reconquest of Sudan (Purves 171).

Emphasizing the 'Ababda's facilitation of Slatin's escape, and following that, Kitchener's conquest, Salih draws our attention to the complex and conflicting loyalties borne of successive and overlapping imperialisms. The 'Ababda's complicity with two imperial states shapes the father's historical positioning vis a vis nationhood and underwrites Sa'eed's own marginality.

The new British occupiers were anxious to bring a new vision of law and order to Sudan, to "domesticate" (Paul 120) and to shape new and orderly subjects, and these aims were achieved through the manipulation of kinship structures. Administrators exploited already-existing tensions among different Beja groups, and among elder and younger men, but through contradictory means which had contradictory effects. As we can see in the example of the 'Ababda, some subjects were complicit with the state and sought to benefit from their relationship with the occupiers, the colonizers, who "provide[d] opportunities for status and accumulation for people previously marginalized from the local power structure" (Meischer 1), but other nomadic groups were not as friendly to colonial rule or the idea of military service and taxes (Purves 171). The disruption of kinship structures also resulted in a growing pool of people disconnected from any customary ties, a population of "disorderly" men who emigrated to the capital. Officials quickly realized that their "orderly ideal" was threatened by this growing population -- mostly newly liberated and runaway slaves taking advantage of the chaos of the transition to Anglo-Egyptian rule to escape to Khartoum (Sikainga *Slaves* 33, 73, 52). Desperately trying to control these populations, facilitate governing, and maintain order, the administration implemented vagrancy laws and mandatory registration. For some of these

very same reasons, the Anglo-Egyptian regime unofficially condoned slavery even as it formally banned the slave trade (Sikainga *Slaves* 71) and the specter of slavery, and the ascribed identity of the slave descendent continued to shape the social identities of the Sudanese, a claim that emerges in my reading of Mustafa Sa'eed.

At first, the British were too preoccupied with the pacification of peoples "better known" (Paul 122) than those of the Red Sea Hills, most prominently those nearer to the sites of the Greater Khartoum government, and so left the Beja alone. But the introduction of the new administration had an immediate effect anyway since new territorial boundaries were drawn up (some arbitrarily) after the Anglo-Egyptian victory and these new boundaries divided existing Beja collectivities, leaving some outside of Sudan's national borders, and others "split tribally and even sub-tribally" (Paul 119, 123). The fragmentation was implemented deliberately as part of government policy and was justified as a way to "avoid friction" and "improve tax-collection" in the notorious Northeastern provinces (Paul 125). According to Peter Verney, the Beja were finally integrated into the political structure of Sudan only during the Condominium period (28). Subjection to law, order and taxation were joined by an attempt to bring state education to Beja children by building schools, an attempt that was rebuffed by some Beja elders (Sharkey 29).[34] The introduction of mechanized farming in the 1940s and the construction of the Aswan Dam irrevocably changed the social fabric of the Beja, and made pastoralism less viable (Verney 27 – 28). During the colonial and then nationalist eras, nomadism was increasingly viewed as anachronistic and hostile to the development

of a modern nation-state (Asad "Seasonal" 58), as "retard[ing] economic, cultural, and social progress" (58).

Whereas the Red Sea area was neglected for much of the beginning of the Anglo-Egyptian rule, the southern provinces were immediately recognized as a special problem and were later referred to in official documents under the phrase "The Southern Question" (Wai 40). The Anglo-Egyptian regime inherited the boundaries of "North" and "South" configured during the Turkiyya, but the areas were further polarized during this new era of colonial rule. According to El Effendi and Omer Beshir, policies and ordinances adopted by the Anglo-Egyptian imperial government between 1930 and 1945, including a.) The Native Administration Ordinances; b.) The Closed Districts Ordinance and c.) The Southern Policy, contributed to the ever-widening chasm between the North and South as two geographies and between the peoples who lived there (see El Effendi 371). In his 1965 book, Beshir Mohammad Said emphasizes the role played by the British in promoting both the isolation of the South and the lasting divisions between North and South, and argues that the establishment of a "firm barrier to Arabization' was the keynote of the British southern policy (20). Sayyid Hurreiz agrees and articulates some further implications of the policy:

> Native administration ordinances enhanced ethnicity and provided it with significant political and social dimensions by establishing the ethnic groups as the administrative units. Whereas the closed districts ordinance tended to isolate and insulate non-Arabized and non-Islamized parts of the country from the rest of the Sudan, the main objective of the southern policy was to build up a series of self-contained racial or tribal units with structure and organization based… upon indigenous customs traditional usage and belief ("Ethnic" 89).[35]

Colonial officials were not fully aware of the political import of their ethnic and tribal policies. So, for example, by 1938, the Black Book (*Al-Kutla al-Sawda*) became the first political organization in Sudan to bring together the concerns of ex-slaves with other non-Arab groups, including the Beja (see Sikainga *Slaves* 169 – 170).

The transition to postcolonial rule in 1956 was, of course, deeply imprinted by these earlier manipulations and their intended and unintended effects. Tim Niblock writes plainly about the profound effects of the Condominium period in particular on early postcolonial politics in Sudan:

> The political history of the 1956 – 69 period was dominated by one central characteristic:
>
> > political influence and authority rested with those social groupings which had benefited from the distribution of resources under the Condominium [Britain's particular form of governance/control over the Sudan]. As might be expected, therefore, those who framed government policy were not inclined to undertake a radical reformation of the country's socio-economic structure. The two kinds of imbalance or inequality which had become prominent under the Condominium – differentiating both regions of the country and social groupings within it – continued and, indeed, became more marked. […] Those who ruled Sudan over these years sought to develop the country within the socio-economic structure which they had inherited from the Condominium era, with minor changes (204)

Peripheral groups such as the Beja nomad, the southerner and the slave descendent continued to be marginalized in national politics, a situation they struggled to redress.[36] Northern Sudanese negotiated independence with British administrators, but when southern army units heard that they would be transferred to northern garrisons upon independence, they mutinied and began what became the first civil war in Sudan (1955 – 1972).[37]

In the remaining sections, I take into account the aforementioned history in developing my reading of the threatening presence of Mustafa Sa'eed, and argue that his

fractured genealogy crystallizes the trials of an integrating nation. I argue that the divided geographies of "South" and "North" and the shifting identities of "slave" and "nomad" emerge in the figure of Sa'eed. Sa'eed's kinlessness is, in the end, paradoxical. A result of the very dislocations and conflicts that produce the modern nation-state, Sa'eed's kinlessness marginalizes him from dominant national ideologies.

Encountering Mustafa Sa'eed

Commenting on the novel in a 1976 interview, Salih claimed that he failed to control the character of Mustafa Sa'eed, who consequently dominated the narrative (Muhammadiyya 126). Salih's admission that the character so exceeded his grasp that he found it difficult to manage the entity that became Mustafa Sa'eed, invites a literary-critical approach that attends to the ways the character bespeaks and betrays cultural obsessions, anxieties and taboos.

As I suggested earlier in the chapter, it is possible to view the plot of *Season* as organized around the narrator's journey to discover the "real" Mustafa Sa'eed. As I will argue, the encounter with Mustafa Sa'eed is also a veiled encounter with the peripheries of Sudan, with the memory of the nation's slave and nomad, and with its legacy of conflict integrating South and North. It is an encounter the narrator feels compelled to stage, as he repeatedly attempts to secure the truth about Sa'eed; yet, it is a history he not ready to fully integrate into his consciousness. His predominant orientation toward Sudan is one of nostalgia, of ancestral land secured and stabilized by the power and love of family. The presence of Mustafa Sa'eed introduces a history of plunder, commercialism

and commodification, marginalization and dislocation that challenges the narrator's memory and vision of the pastoral.

As scholars have noted, *Season* begins with a direct address to an audience: the narrator invokes an audience of men when he says, "It was, gentlemen, after a long absence – seven years to be exact, during which time I was studying in Europe – that I returned to my people" (1). Mona Amyuni draws our attention to the construction of the original Arabic: *'udtu il ahli* (I returned to my people), highlighting the importance of the opening line to the mood of the narration:

> [t]he dynamic first person singular in *'udtu* (I returned), and the possessive first person pronoun in *ahli* (my people) immediately convey the sense of intimacy and belonging (I, my people, my tribe, us) which are assumed by the narrator and taken for granted at the beginning of the novel ("Introduction" 19)

Amyuni, and later Hassan (*Tayeb* 117 – 118), emphasize the importance of the possessive first person pronoun in *ahli* (my people) to the narrator's construction of intimacy, belonging and community, but they only mention briefly the gendered orientation of the address: the gentlemen who are invoked (*ya sadati*). The choice of "Gentlemen" in the translation brings to the fore not only the gendered quality of the address, but also its classed dimension, as evidenced by the significance of the term within British culture and history. As scholars of British culture and history have shown us, the classed dimension of "Gentlemen" was extraordinarily complex and was intensely contested, especially during the Victorian period important to the unfolding of *Season*'s narrative. Furthermore, the term "Gentlemen" carried with it variable behavioral, occupational and moral connotations depending on the context of its deployment. The earliest uses of "Gentlemen" implied an aristocratic inheritance, or as John Ruskin wrote, a man of "pure

gens" (4). The "Gentleman" status was based on blood lines but also property ownership, and was then enhanced by behavioral norms of respectability, chivalry, and gentleness. Mercantile elites challenged the aristocratic monopoly of Gentleman status and claimed the term as recognition of their newly acquired wealth; eventually, graduates with a traditional liberal education were widely accepted as embodying the Gentleman role, even without an inheritance of nobility. Yet, even as the term gained widespread currency, it retained its classed implications and some scholars argue its deployment solidified boundaries between the upper and middle classes and perpetuated social hierarchies. As deployed by the narrator of *Season,* the term seems to serve the purpose of legitimating his propertied identity and distancing him and his audience from Mustafa Sa'eed, who, it is implied, is never quite "Gentleman."

"*Sadati*," which is the plural of *Sayyid*, also carries connotations relevant to a reading of *Season*, some of which closely mirror the meanings of "Gentlemen" and others which are inflected by the linguistic/social/cultural contexts of Sudan and the Arabic-speaking, Muslim world. Translated variously as "Gentleman," "Mister," and "Sir," *Sayyid* has older meanings of "Chief" and "Master" (Wehr 440). Significantly as well, Sayyid is the title given to the direct male descendents of Prophet Muhammad, and so connotes the distinction of noble lineage and blood.

As critics have suggested, the gendered address "*ya Sadati*" may call up associations with Arabic performative genres such as *hakawati,* where the presumed audience is comprised of all men, but I would like to suggest the *'asaba,* or male agnates, as an additional, imagined, association of the address to "gentlemen." Defined as the

core group of patrilineally related males by anthropologist Fluehr-Lobban, the ‘asaba “constitute the most prominent figures in the descent system and extended family” in Sudan (*Islamic Societies* 89), and is “one of the strongest vestiges of the customary patrilineal system” that prevailed among pre-Islamic nomadic peoples (*Islamic Law* 203, also see 202 – 237). Although the coming of Islam shifted emphasis somewhat onto the nuclear family (husband, wife and children), the central position of the ‘asaba has continued up until this day (*Islamic Law* 203 - 4), and the narrator’s address recalls the importance of ‘asaba as a social institution that supports a more widespread patriarchy. The economic base of the society is the extended family, and the ‘asaba continue to make key family decisions, and most significantly, control marriage negotiations. By favoring endogamous unions, and particularly first-cousin (bint ‘amm) marriage, the ‘asaba retain control over a primary vehicle for the transmission of wealth and consolidate it within the patrilineal system. The narrator fixates on the property around him – the palm tree outside his window (2) and his grandfather’s house, made of “the very mud in which the wheat is grown” (71) – immoveable property such as land, date trees, and houses, that the ‘asaba invest in as the symbol of family wealth (see Fluehr-Lobban *Islamic Societies* 107). The narrator’s tone recalls a sense of reassurance at being part of the ‘asaba and its claims on family wealth, and calls upon an audience of “Gentlemen” who share his identity as *Sayyid* and his cultural patrimony. As he sits under his favorite acacia tree, and listens to the melody of the birds, and the barking of the dogs, the narrator exults in his sense of being at one with “his people” and with the geography and landscape itself:

> I feel a sense of stability, I feel that I am important, that I am continuous and integral. No, I am not a stone thrown into the water but a seed sown in a field. I go

> to my grandfather and he talks to me of life forty years ago, fifty years ago, even eighty, and my feeling of security is strengthened. (5)[38]

Here, the power and protection of patriarchal lineage is yoked to images of ownership and cultivation of the land. The imagery of the seed naturalizes his belonging and insinuates an ongoing link generated between men. Ownership of land and the distinction of blood are knotted together in the construction of the narrators, and audience's, gentlemanly identity.

It is important to recognize that just as the invocation of "Gentlemen" constructs a particular group of men and so excludes other men, the 'asaba delineates a particular hierarchically-organized line of men at the exclusion of others. In questions of inheritance, the agnatic line and patrilineal kin are generally favored over relations through the mother's side, and blood or consanguineal relations are favored over relatives by marriage (see *Islamic Societies* 107). Those men in the extended family who lie outside the 'asaba, such as the husband or uterine brother (half-brother), may in fact represent competing claims that threaten the primacy and united front of the 'asaba.

Sa'eed is therefore marginalized on several fronts, all of which are interconnected: he is not, and can never be, a Gentleman, he has no 'asaba, and even further, he is profoundly kinless and without *nasab.* During his first confession to the narrator, Sa'eed says of himself and his mother, "We had no relatives. She and I acted as relatives to each other (Salih 19). Sa'eed uses the same term – *ahl* – to refer to relatives as the narrator used in the opening of the book. Sa'eed's confession, then, of not having any "people" takes on a greater resonance in this context even as it links him genealogically to a mother. The narrator's claim to "return to his people" consolidates his

belonging as it reinforces Sa'eed's estrangement from an extended family, village and, more broadly, nation.

The only living relative that Sa'eed claims attachment to is his mother, but as I argued earlier, the absence of a patrilineage cannot be compensated by the presence of a mother and is in fact registered as a severe social injury. "To be without nasab," according to Fleuhr-Lobban, "is virtually not to exist" (*Islamic Societies* 109), or, in the words of the civil servant, to be a "nobody" (*Season* 54) or "non-entity" (53). Even when given the chance to establish a genealogical connection with his mother, Sa'eed refuses and distances himself from the bond with his mother. In stories reported by the narrator, Sa'eed consistently refers to his mother as someone devoid of personhood: "When I think back, I see her clearly with her thin lips resolutely closed, with something on her face like a mask, I don't know – a thick mask, as though her face were the surface of the sea" (19) and "It was as if she were some stranger on the road with whom circumstances had chanced to bring me" (19). When a colonial official who wants to register Sa'eed for school asks him about his guardian, he avoids the question and disavows any knowledge of his mother (21). When Sa'eed reveals his plans to his mother, she alternately shows no reaction and mouths the presumed opinion of his long-dead father. The mother is not in full possession of her voice or her identity. Unlike the narrator, who can confidently – and nostalgically – recuperate his family memory in the service of consolidating his adult identity, Sa'eed cannot recuperate his own mother toward an understanding of himself.

In fact, Sa'eed as a "nobody" and a "non-entity," together with the absence of any sentimentalism with regards to family ties and their loss, bounds him clearly to shared

definitions of slavery in Sudan. In her study of the Ottoman period, Shaun Marmon claims it is the slave who is the epitome of the "kinless being" and the "true outsider" (15). In her discussion of the definition of slave among the Masalit in Western Sudan, Lidwein Kapteijns writes: "The main onus of being a slave was that of not belonging, of not being a Masaliti but a stranger" (Mahdist 48). According to G. P. Makris, the term slave *('abd)* for Northern Sudanese, did not define "a status but the absence of a status" and the "lack of those attachments of lineage or genealogy that were central to their society" (28). Further, Makris refers to McHugh's eloquent formulation of the slave as defined "by their marginality, their outsider status: they had no genealogy at all" (27). Despite the emphasis on patrilineality, a slave mother could overshadow any other lineage. In pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, according to Bernard Lewis, "Arabs looked down on the sons of a slave mother, regarding them as inferior to the sons of freeborn Arab mothers" (*Race* 89). Furthermore, according to Lewis, "the stigma was attached to the status of the mother" (89).

Sa'eed's kinlessness – as I've been arguing here – also the mark of a slave – distinguishes him from the other villagers and attracts the attention of the narrator. It is true that Sa'eed is a stranger in the village of Wad Hamid, but it is also significant that the Salih's corpus subtly supports an underlying identification between Sa'eed and the village, since the pre-story of the village available to us in earlier fiction by Salih calls up associations to slavery. The founding myth of the village of Wad Hamid, as told in Salih's first published short story, "The Doum Tree of Wad Hamid," links the place with an eponymous slave:

> My father, reporting what my grandfather had told him, said: 'Wad Hamid, in times gone by, used to be the slave of a wicked man. He was one of God' holy saints but kept his faith to himself, not daring to pray openly lest his wicked master should kill him. When he could no longer bear his life with this infidel he called upon God to deliver him and a voice told him to spread his prayer-mat on the water and that when it stopped by the shore he should descend. The prayer-mat put him down at the place where the doum tree is now and which used to be waste land. (Johnson Davies "Doum Tree" 92)

The agency in this passage is muted, since Wad Hamid's arrival is attributed to divine intervention rather than a conscious or willed decision. Lidwein Kapteijns suggests that the definition of a slave connotes not only an absence of genealogical ties but a lack of free will. She suggests that a slave's identity as stranger was compounded in cases where the travel was compelled "in particular of being a stranger who had not come voluntarily, of his own accord, but who had come by force of necessity or had been brought by force" (48). It is significant, then, that in his description of his arrival to the village, Sa'eed uses a language that echoes Wad Hamid's in its evocation of mystery and fate:

> All my life I've longed to settle down in this part of the country, for some unknown reason. I took a boat not knowing where I was bound for. When it put in at this village, I liked the look of it. Something inside me told me that this was the place. And so you see, that's how it was. (xx)

Thus, "a voice" tells Wad Hamid to descend on the banks of the shore of his village and "something inside" tells Sa'eed to debark when his board reaches Wad Hamid. Sa'eed's language here recalls the language of Wad Hamid, and both recall a circumstance where free will has little place. Circumscribed by the institution of slavery, transformed into property and effectively legally dead, Wad Hamid and Sa'eed do not use the language of free will and agency. As I will discuss in more detail below, Sa'eed's descriptions of his impassive mother and his own fatalistic attitude may be illuminated if read in the context

of the transition to a sphere of limited autonomy and agency, that is, the realm of commodities, or of slaves.

For, even as Sa'eed imagines he has an ineluctable connection to the village of Wad Hamid, he remains a stranger to the locals. Mustafa is known as and referred to as *gharib,* the Arabic word for stranger or foreigner, which has the same root as the word for West, *gharb.* A primary connection suggested by the narrative is between "gharib"/"Stranger" and Sa'eed's colonized identity, but there are parallel associations of "gharib" to slaves as strangers, as noted above. These associations enable us to generate interpretations that suggest the connections that emerged between subordinate members of traditional society, such as slaves and in some cases nomads, and British colonial society. In addition, alternative local associations tie the word "gharib" to those of "West African," and more broadly, African descent in Sudan. All of these meanings only strengthen the picture we get of Sa'eed as a stranger in the village, and Sa'eed's very presence as stranger triggers the narrator's journey to truly find him, or, in other words, encounter the real Mustafa Sa'eed. In the act of narration, the narrator joins with his audience of "Gentlemen" in questing after and encountering Mustafa Sa'eed, a "true outsider" (Marmon 15) and stranger.

Entering Sa'eed's Closets; Entering al-sila' (the realm of commodities)

A scene very near the end of the book where the narrator enters Sa'eed's previously secret and locked room may be read as the culmination of his long quest to "find" the man who has haunted him for so long. The room is cluttered with objects, commodities that Sa'eed has accumulated over the years and that speak of his past. As

the narrator moves through the secret room, the objects prompt him to also explore Sa'eed's life in London, and transport him to the London den Sa'eed occupied there. In this and the following section, I will argue that by entering Sa'eed's secret room, and connecting it to Sa'eed's London den, the narrator metaphorically enters into the "realm of commodities" – a category developed by Islamic jurists to describe the sphere occupied by slaves (Marmon 3). The narrator enters the realm of commodities in two ways: first, he is literally surrounded, and even immersed, in objects – objects that carry Sa'eed's memory. Second, through his presence in the secret room, and his projected presence in the London den, the narrator experiences the objectification that characterizes the realm of commodities.

The narrator's entry into the secret room is authorized by Sa'eed who bequeaths him a key upon his disappearance. Although the secret space had been adjacent to the house he shared with Hosna, it was successfully concealed from all in the village, including his wife. The narrator opens the door with trepidation, and after lighting a match to illuminate the darkened room, he struggles with the out-of-place images and shadows materializing around him. Finally, he finds and lights an oil-lamp and is stunned by his surroundings; he is faced with the replica of a Victorian sitting room. The next three pages of text recount an improbable inventory of objects, as the narrator walks through the room as if leading a forensic investigation. He is guided by his senses while in the room: he breathes in odors of incense and touches marble, silk, leather. His sense of vision, however, dominates his apprehension of the scene around him and his eyes avidly explore the landscape and draw in the objects. He sees a fireplace, Persian rugs,

Victorian chairs (136), a blue velvet settee (138), charcoal drawings of various shapes and sizes, oil paintings, excerpts from poems and letters (147), and photographs of figures from Sa'eed's past (139). The scene lasts an entire chapter, and the narrator faces the secrets of Sa'eed's past through his diaries, notes, paintings, photographs, and the flashbacks and memories evoked through his encounters with this material. Scholars have noted the climactic force of the scene, and Edward Said has interpreted it as an intertextual referencing of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* He reads the narrator's traumatizing encounter with Sa'eed's "inventory of European books stacked in [his] secret library" (Said *Culture* 211), as a "mimetic reversal" of Marlowe's horrified encounter with Kurtz' "skull-topped fence" in the Congo. Much has been made of the secret room qua Victorian sitting room as a symbol of Sa'eed's colonized consciousness. I would like to push past readings that rely on generalizations of the European colonial encounter with Africa and instead use the narrator's traumatized encounter with the secret room as an entry-point for setting up a discussion of the secrets of Sa'eed's ancestry. The narrator's constant pauses, delays and attempts to "destroy" and burn what he faces (*Season* 135) testifies to the traumatic effects of the encounter. Indeed, the scene is meant to expose Mustafa Sa'eed to the audience of "Gentlemen" and forces the narrator and his audience into an uncomfortable confrontation with Sa'eed's past (*Season* 134 – 165). The question of the room – its status as a site of mediation between the narrator, the audience, and Mustafa Sa'eed, its status as a repository for the commodities that define Sa'eed, and its status as an object of legal transaction (its status as his estate, and its transfer as a

piece of property) – becomes an ideal jumping-off point in examining Sa'eed's historical, economic and legal function in the text.

As other scholars have noted, what stands out in the secret room in Sudan is its Victorian décor. As they note, Sa'eed's secret Victorian library is most obviously linked to British imperialism. Other critics, most notably Hassan, have noted the way Sa'eed's London den is also a space produced in and through the general discourses of imperialism. I suggest that if we acknowledge and tease apart the connections between the secret room in Sudan and the London den, those connections may lead us to pay more attention to how the imperial dimensions of the rooms tie them to each other, to Sudan and to the South of the slave mother. I would like to argue that both rooms and their commodified displays take on particular significance in light of Sa'eed's slave mother from the South who, although she remains consciously out of reach and unavailable for assimilation, is an undercurrent in the narrative.

Although the modern South is partially a product of British intervention and policies, it also has a pre-colonial and Ottoman history of plunder, slave-raiding and slave-trading. I suggest that in entering Sa'eed's secret room, and imaginatively entering the London den, the narrator is also metaphorically entering the "realm of commodities" – a category developed by Islamic jurists to describe the sphere occupied by slaves. Disconnected from the powerful extended family, the slave is kinless and stigmatized, and also powerless as an individual and limited in his capacity to act of and for himself. In her discussion of this legal category, Marmon explains: "The enslaved individual suffered a kind of legal and social metamorphosis. He left the realm of human beings and

entered the realm of commodities (*al-sila'*)" (3) and this movement between two realms continued to define the slave's hybrid status (viii). Called "property with a voice" (Marmon ix), the slave was equated with a commodity (3) and moved between the category of "person" and "thing" (viii). When the narrator enters Sa'eed's secret room, he is faced with the detritus – the objects – that have defined Sa'eed's life. As he makes his way through the room, the objects speak to him about Sa'eed's past, and as I will continue to suggest in what follows, that past recalls the object status of his mother and the exploited South. Becoming commodity divests one of agency, and puts into question the presumption of patriarchal privilege issuing simply from gender alone. In fact, many of the legal terms used to designate a slave in Islamic law make some reference to an injured masculinity. Introducing the terms used by jurists, Shaun Marmon says:

> The terms most commonly employed by jurists describing the status of the slave are those that imply helplessness and deficiency such as 'ajz, 'impotence,' naqs, 'lack' or 'defect,' du'f, 'weakness,' and hulk or 'death.' Such legal metaphors made the position of the slave quite clear: he was an 'incomplete' and vulnerable being. (5)

That is, when a person transfers over to the "realm of commodities," he becomes "legally impotent" and deprived of the full capacities to act as a (masculine) person. As I will suggest, Sa'eed's memories tell of his playing with the boundaries of self-and-commodity and with the mechanisms of the commoditization of self. By doing so, the tensions and contradictions of a subaltern masculinity are also revealed.

"Property with a Voice": Illegal and Impotent

As the narrator makes his way around the room, touching the furniture, looking at pictures, and reading letters and diaries, he is transported back to Sa'eed's years in England, and in particular back to his other "secret" room – his bedroom in London decorated with the artifacts of Sudan.

As I described in the History section, divisions between "South" and "North" were already drawn during the Turkiyya when the South became a frontier zone and geography of raw materials and slaves, but were exacerbated during Anglo-Egyptian rule (1898 – 1956). Beginning as early as 1902 the British administered the provinces of South and North differently, but it was after a 1924 uprising in Egypt and Sudan that the British grew increasingly vigilant in their attempts to secure their rule. Guided by the assumption that the cultures of the regional South were irrevocably different from the North, the British devised a separate set of policies for each region and also communicated their paternalistic intention to protect the South from a predatory North. The policy in the Southern Sudan in 1929, according to Beshir Mohamed Said, was to "build a series of self-contained racial or tribal units based upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs" (20). In their attempt to re-create indigenous units, the British reified ethnic groups and traditions, creating "culture" as a kind of property owned by those who performed it authentically. The means by which the Southern Policy would be implemented are stated in a statement of the Civil Secretary in 1930:

> [t]he return to tribal law and customs, the return to tribal family life, the return to indigenous languages, the encouragement by every means of English as a lingua franca, an attack on Arabic patois and names, an attack on Northern customs, an attack on Arabic dress; the removal of Northern mamurs and sub-mamurs (administrative officers); the encouragement of Greek and Syrian traders; the removal of Northern traders from the Southern provinces. (21)

The year 1930 marked the imposition of the official Separatist Southern Policy of the British, whereby the South developed independently of the North. It was not until 1947, under pressure from Northerners, that the colonial government turned their policy toward national integration.[39]

As he travels across the border to Europe and into the bourgeois privacy of his bedroom in London, Sa'eed transforms himself into an artifact and into a commodity. He markets himself as an exotic "Afro-Arab" to British women hungry for "otherness" in their lives. The room in London becomes one of Sa'eed's "secret rooms" – a place where he retreats after his work as an economist during the day, and a room he equips with the exotica he needs to sell himself as commodity. The room is described briefly early in the novel by Sa'eed who calls it a "graveyard" (30) and admits its use as a forum for the repetitive seductions of British women. Sa'eed describes cushions, colored lights, sandalwood and "Eastern perfumes, lotions, unguents, powders and pills" arranged in such a way as to construct a fantasy for his women visitors" (30). Standing in the secret room in Sudan after Sa'eed's disappearance, the narrator remembers Sa'eed's descriptions of his London abode:

> [m]y house, the den of lethal lies that I had deliberately built up, lie upon lie: the sandalwood and incense; the ostrich feathers and ivory and ebony figurines; the paintings and drawings of forests of palm trees along the shores of the Nile, boats with sails like doves' wings, suns setting over the mountains of the Red Sea, camel caravans wending their way along sand dunes on the borders of the Yemen, baobab trees in Kordofan, naked girls from the tribes of Zandi, the Nuer and the Shuluk, fields of banana and coffee on the equator, old temples in the district of Nubia; Arabic books with decorated covers written in ornate Kufic script; Persian carpets, pink curtains, large mirrors on the walls, and colored lights in the corners. (146)

The objects in this room are not functional, but instead serve as raw materials for the imperial imagination. Gathered together and assembled within the frame of the English bedroom, the disparate goods are part of a carefully orchestrated staging of space. It is in this room that Sa'eed stages his calculated conquests, a venture that Wail Hassan calls "sexual wars" (Tayeb 126). Hassan's response to this passage attends to its sexual economy, an economy profoundly shaped by its imperial context. He writes:

> These articles belong to very different cultural, historical and geographical contexts –
>
> from Egypt to tropical Africa, medieval Arabia, Persia, and contemporary Sudan, not to mention the bordelloesque bedroom. What they have in common is their fetishism in sexualized Western fantasies about Africa and the Orient. Mustafa's bizarrely decorated apartment deliberately stages these fantasies" (*Tayeb* 97).

I would like to build on Hassan's insights to argue that the décor and costumes link to colonial spaces that serve as substitutes, deferments and displacements of South Sudan as a nodal point in histories of imperialism, and a place that served as a "factory for raw materials and passions that propped up the institution of culture elsewhere" (Simone 116). In the space of the den, the colony and the metropole, the "raw materials" and "institution of culture," are collapsed and brought together. That "institution of culture" is revealed in the den as scenes of sado-masochistic play between Mustafa Sa'eed and his British partners. Indeed, the décor and costumes merely set the stage for the elaborate master/slave masquerade Sa'eed performs with several of his women guests, including Ann Hammond, who pleads earnestly: "You are Mustafa, my master and my lord; I am Sausan, your slave girl" (146). In a reversal of the hierarchy of master/slave, Sa'eed says of another one of his female targets: "It was as though I were a slave Shahrayar you buy in the market for a dinar encountering a Scheherazade begging

amidst the rubble of a city destroyed by a plague" (34). Sa'eed imports the geography of imperial trade into the metropolitan center and invents himself as both master and slave. In scenes of ritualized S/M, Sa'eed imports the South as a frontier zone where men rushed to trade ostrich feathers, beads, cattle, ivory and slaves (Sikainga *Western Bahr al-Ghazal* 3) into the prim and proper bourgeois bedrooms of England and thus reconnects the invention of regional, racial and religious difference in Sudan (South/North, African/Arab, non-Muslim/Muslim) to imperial interventions and endeavors. I suggest we think about the two secret rooms – the den in London and the library in Sudan – as singular depictions of connected and ongoing violent processes of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial integration that turned objects, bodies, relationships and stories into capital and commodities. Already in the tenth century, Arab writer Mutahhar ibn Tahi al-Maqdisi notes, "To the Zanj food and clothing are exported; from them come gold, slaves, and coconuts" (qtd in Lewis 51). A more contemporary scholar writes: "Historically, and in varying degrees, certain commodities played a particularly significant role in private capital accumulation. The most important commodities from this point of view were gold, ivory, ostrich eggs and fathers, livestock and skins, gum Arabic, cotton and oil seeds. The importance of these items was due mainly to their potential as exports" (Babiker Mahmoud 33 – 34). Babiker Mahmoud also reminds us that the exports were only one part of the vast networks that connected Sudan to a globalizing economy: "[T]he British interest in Sudan was as a source of raw materials and as a market for manufactured goods" (27). Keeping these interdependent networks in mind, we may see the bedroom in London as a "den" of raw materials, artifacts and

slaves exported to the metropolitan industrialized society, while the Victorian library situated in Sudan symbolizes the manufactured goods imported into the colony in hopes of producing new consumer desires and tastes. Even the English titles in the Victorian library may be interpreted in this regard, since the 1930 Separation policy led the South to develop along different lines than the North, and to install an educational system in English, rather than Arabic, a system that continued to have dominance even after the 1955 independence. Arousing consumer desires, and offering attractive consumer goods, was one method by which the colonial administrators could ensure the integration of the population into the money economy (Babiker Mahmoud 27). Recognizing the self-conscious referencing of commodification as a theme connecting the rooms helps us to link Sa'eed's self-fetishization to the "realm of commodities" and more precisely to the objectification of his mother as slave. The South of the slave mother is where Sa'eed's history begins, and is also the starting point in a chain of commodifications as we enter modernity.

As Anne McClintock points out in her influential book *Imperial Leather*, "[i]t is not accidental that the historical subculture of S/M emerged in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century with the emergence of imperialism in its modern industrial form" (142). As a "theatre of conversion, S/M reverses and transforms the social meanings it borrows" and thus reveals the social order of imperial domination, colonial order and biological determinism as unnatural, scripted and invented (McClintock 143). According to this schema, S/M becomes one way for a subaltern such as Sa'eed to reveal the contingency of his positioning in capitalist modernity. Fetishizing himself as exotic,

Sa'eed fashions himself as valuable commodity and thus converts the meaning of the trade in ivory and slaves into one where he signifies for himself. Shifting over from person to thing, the slave becomes impotent, as the Islamic jurists understood, but in injecting agency into the very mechanisms of commodification and into the commodity itself, S/M rituals restore agency to the slave. Furthermore, in repetitively enacting rituals of seduction, Sa'eed compensates for any possible "impotence" and performs a version of hypermasculinity, objectifying his environment and his partners in turn. The interrelation of the commodities on display and Sa'eed as commodity serve to draw our attention to not only the thematic of production, property, and possession but also to the invention and reification of identity in colonial and postcolonial worlds. This type of reading illuminates the entanglement of geography and identity, and their production as concepts, within colonial and postcolonial Sudan. A divided Sudan is revealed as a production of economic history – the history of trade and markets that were part and parcel of imperialism. If S/M is a cultural response to and attempt to undermine the hierarchies borne of imperial domination, S/M also reveals the stubborn survival of hierarchical structures. As Sa'eed enacts them, the S/M rituals are both resistant and reactionary. Sa'eed's S/M rituals reveal, finally, the inescapability, within the narrative, of the cultural memory of the South and of slave descent.

Indeed, the S/M rituals allow Sa'eed only momentary escape from the emasculating effects of his position as colonial subject, a position that overlays his hidden genealogy. The reaction to his crimes in a court of law in England only exacerbates his emasculation. When Sa'eed eventually goes to trial for the murder of his wife and the

deaths of his affairs, his attorney tries to persuade the jury of gentlemen (33) to pass a lighter sentence on his client, arguing that the ultimate responsibility lay in the colonial situation shaping Sa'eed's mind. Admitting his client's guilt in the murders, Professor Maxwell Foster-Keen argues that Sa'eed is a "noble person whose mind was able to absorb Western civilization but it broke his heart" (33). The passing of lighter sentences recalls the practice among Islamic jurists when it came to slaves. Having moved into the "realm of commodities" the slave was "legally impotent" or "legally dead" since "he [had] no right to many of the powers that are associated with the living" (Marmon 4). Thus crippled, the slave received a less severe punishment for a crime (Marmon 33), even as he was recognized as responsible for its execution.[40] The slave, having the status of property and not personhood, was not accorded full self-possession, and therefore could not receive the same punishment as others in the society. Mustafa Sa'eed's treatment in the court of law reveals his subaltern positioning and recalls his stigmatized genealogy.

Hierarchies and Genealogies

If we return back to Sudan, back to the secret room that triggers the memories of London, back to the narrator's discovery of the room, we find more evidence of Sa'eed's stigmatized genealogy. It is much earlier in the text that we learn that prior to his disappearance, Mustafa Sa'eed wrote a letter that appoints the narrator as guardian of his wife and sons, and gives him unprecedented access to his secret room. In his letter, Sa'eed writes: "I leave my wife, two sons, and all my worldly goods in your care, knowing that you will act honourably in every respect" (65). Sa'eed's appointment of the narrator as guardian and his invitation to enter his previously sealed-off property, draw

attention to Sa'eed's lack of kin and his deviation from the normative legal arrangements required by traditional patrilineal relationships.

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban explains patrilocal residence as a "strong complement" to patrilineal descent and defines it as the custom in which a bride leaves her natal home and the newly married couple takes up residence with or near the groom's family (*Islamic Societies* 89). The "nearness" (qaraba) of the extended family is experienced in two ways: as a physical proximity as well as a genealogical closeness, and living arrangements are typically determined by patrilineal custom, with the living spaces of extended families clustered together. Sa'eed's property, however, lies on a plot of land he purchased near his wife's family's homestead rather than in proximity of the residence of his 'asaba.

Disconnected from an 'asaba, Sa'eed has no sanctioned authorities with whom to confer regarding the transfer of his property and wealth, thus he alone decides to grant guardianship to the narrator, a veritable stranger. When, early in the book, the narrator goes to his grandfather, described as an expert on the genealogies of all the families in the area, to gather more information on Sa'eed's background, his grandfather confesses he knows nothing about the man other than that

> [h]e was from the vicinity of Khartoum and that about five years ago he had come to the village and had bound some land. All of the inheritors of this land had, with the exception of one woman, gone away. The man had therefore tempted her with money and bought it from her. (6)

The grandfather's brief mention of the "vicinity of Khartoum" as his origin subtly indicates the urban periphery which was a place of settlement for ex-slaves and others disconnected from kin during transition periods and upheavals in the Turkiyya, Mahdiyya and Anglo-Egyptian empires. Arriving as a self-styled businessman, Mustafa Sa'eed

interrupts inherited ownership, heralding the capitalist development of the land and blurring the boundaries of legitimate residency and marginal occupancy in the village. The conversation between narrator and grandfather serves to confirm Sa'eed's outsiderness, his status as "stranger" (*ghareeb*) in the community. In highlighting traditional ties to land through blood and family memory, the conversation also bolsters the narrator's beliefs in his own claims to belonging in the village, a belonging he emphasizes through his affective identification with and investment in his grandfather's "immoveable property," a point I discussed earlier. Throughout the narrative, the narrator works hard to differentiate himself from Sa'eed, emphasizing his permanent roots in a stable village environment. The narrator's ambivalence towards Sa'eed's presence signals his awareness of the challenge to the traditional family system Sa'eed represents, a threat the narrator becomes increasingly aware of in the course of the narrative, and a threat about which he indirectly warns the audience of Gentlemen. The narrator's sense of ease and peace derives at least in part from his assumption of family inheritance and participation in the patrilineal family drama. Cash, as one technology of modernity and capitalism, interrupts the family system, seduces individuals, and produces new modes of subjectivity and relationship. Sa'eed's cash purchase of land affords him autonomy but also symbolizes his distance from a masculine identity that issues from the security, continuity and legitimacy of the 'asaba. To build on this point, it is also interesting to note Sa'eed's association with colonialism and his purchase of land. In a study of circulars of the Shari'a courts in Sudan, Fleuhr-Lobban notes how land values increased during the colonial period due to the gradual introduction of capitalist economic

principles leading to new forms of wealth and the need for laws to regulate the exchange of this wealth ("Circulars" 83). As Fleuhr-Lobban writes, "new property relations create new social relations" (83) and we can see that Sa'eed's directive to pass his wealth on to his wife and sons privileges affinal relations, but also the nuclear family, a development that Fleuhr-Lobban finds evidence for in the 1925 circulars (83) and ties to the burgeoning capitalist economy.

Sa'eed's insecure position within the narrative and within Hosna's 'asaba is clear early in the narrative. This insecurity may again be linked back to his kinlessness and identity as son of a slave. Mustafa Sa'eed functions as a phantom presence, arriving in the village from nowhere and disappearing into nowhere in the end, but this phantomality may be interpreted through the lens of the social effects of illegitimacy. Asked to expound on the events leading up to Sa'eed's marriage to Hosna, the narrator's grandfather disparages all the parties involved. He places most of the responsibility for what he considers an ill-founded union on Hosna's family, who he says "don't mind to whom they marry their daughters" (6) implying that Sa'eed is not an appropriate match for Hosna. This brief but charged encounter may be illuminated by the legal doctrine *al-kafa'a fi al-zowaj (Kafa'a),* or "equality of standard in marriage," translated also as "equality of birth and social status in marriage" (85) by Bernard Lewis in his book *Race and Slavery in the Middle East* (1990).

It is during the Ottoman occupation that the law in Sudan became divided into a commercial code and a criminal code administered by a system of secular courts, and a personal status and family law administered by the Shari'a courts, applying Hanafi law,

one school of Islamic jurisprudence (Fluehr-Lobban *Islamic Law* 30).[41] *Kafa'a*, as an aspect of family law, is administered through the Shari'a courts, and although it does not forbid unequal marriages, it regulates marriage by allowing the *wali,* or woman's guardian, to intervene to stop or annul an unsuitable union (Lewis 85). Fluehr-Lobban observes that the doctrine of Kafa'a is rarely imposed by law in Sudan, but is rather maintained through the customary arrangement of marriage (*Islamic Law* 126). By criticizing Hosna's father for his laxity in determining and protecting the selection of a marriage partner for his daughter, the narrator's grandfather invokes the expectations around the traditional role and responsibility of the *wali* as a gatekeeper of a family's honor and respectability. The "equality of standard in marriage" is not simply about equality between two individuals, but rather articulates a set of norms governing the appropriate match of families. By not intervening in the match between Hosna with Mustafa Sa'eed, Hosna's father renounces his role and paves the way for his daughter to enter an exogamous union, or "stranger marriage" – a marriage outside of the broadly interpreted patrilineal kin group (Fluehr-Lobban *Islamic Societies* 99). Endogamy (*fabrda*), or marriage within the larger extended family, acts as a control on the potential pool of marriageable partners, thereby increasing the likelihood that each partner is "equal" in status. Endogamy also serves a stabilizing function as it facilitates a system of inheritance whereby wealth and property are consolidated within an extended family unit. As a stranger, Mustafa Sa'eed disrupts and threatens the system of endogamy. With an obscured genealogy, Sa'eed is automatically of questionable status, and thereby cannot attain "equality of standards" set out by Kafa'a.

It is his very detachment from a reputable genealogy that marks Sa'eed as one of low status, and therefore an unsuitable match. According to the Hanafi interpretation of Kafa'a, "the groom must be equal to the woman's family in religion, occupation, family standing, in blood (ethnicity) and in freedom from bondage" (Fluehr-Lobban *Islamic Law* 89). As a descendent of a slave, Sa'eed's ancestry would not match Hosna's which automatically excludes him as an appropriate spouse. The fact that only a man's background need be scrutinized is rationalized by nineteenth-century jurist Sheikh Abdel Kadir bin Mekkawi: "Equality is essential on the part of the man, not on the part of the woman; because a noble man does not disdain to marry a slave woman, while a noble woman disdains to be united with a low born man" (qtd in Fleuhr-Lobban *Islamic Law* 125). Mekkawi's statement reveals woman's subordination as a normative condition; the acceptance of woman's secondary status as "normal" enables her figuration as slave, without any injury on the part of the man with whom she partners. On the other hand, the "low born man" is an emasculating presence, an "object of disdain," and thus a potential disgrace to his female partner and her family. What becomes significant in the case of Sa'eed and Hosna is that Sa'eed's "disgrace" is not simply his alone, but is apparently contagious – metaphorically "polluting" Hosna and leading to the tragedy of the homicide/suicide that occurs even after Sa'eed's disappearance.[42]

Unspoken distinctions inform Sa'eed's reception and integration in the village, and these distinctions have to do with his stigmatized genealogy and his connections to the peripheral regions of Sudan. Kafa'a circumscribes Musatafa Sa'eed as an inadequate marriage partner for Hosna, and a man of "low status." It is a discourse that divests

Sa'eed of agency and puts into question the presumption of patriarchal privilege issuing simply from gender alone, and recalls the metaphors of slavery noted above. In his discussion of the reaction to those with slave ancestry among the Kababish in Sudan, Talal Asad emphasizes the intergenerational stigma of slave origin and the difficulty of escaping its effects. He writes, "[S]lave origin is a serious status disability which cannot be entirely overcome []. [T]he poorest member of Awlad Fadlallah always has higher status than the richest man of slave extraction – a distinction reinforced by the fact that, whereas the former is traditionally eligible for high political office, the latter is not" (188). In another episode that recalls this prejudice towards those with questionable ancestry, Sa'eed is refused a leadership role in the village Agricultural Cooperative. The narrator visits the group, run by his good friend Mahjoub. After witnessing a heated argument and Sa'eed's skillful facilitation, the narrator wonders to himself why Sa'eed was not voted President: "There was not the slightest doubt that the man was of a different clay, that by rights he should have been President of the Committee; perhaps because he was not a local man they had not elected him" (12 – 13). In reflecting on the possible reasons for the Cooperative's rejection of Sa'eed as a legitimate leader, we may productively consider his slave descent as a serious status disability, but we may equally consider his lack of experience cultivating land, his rootlessness and nomadic existence, and tie this back to the Beja father who embodies the lineage of nomadism. That is, Sa'eed's fractured genealogy emerges as stigma in his everyday interactions in the village.

Throughout his stay in Wad Hamid, Sa'eed appears to attempt to overcome the "status disability" of his fractured genealogy. G. P. Makris explains that the "absence of status" that defines a slave in Sudan is also complexly tied to forms of behavior that identify one as slave. Therefore, one was not only born a slave but was re-identified as slave by the performance – or absence – of certain deeds, for example, the accusation that one is demonstrating "the want of religious propriety" (Makris 27). The grandfather comments that Mustafa Sa'eed "regularly attended mosque for Friday prayers" (7) inviting the narrator to perceive Sa'eed more generously as someone making the effort to become a "good person" through the practice of propriety and, perhaps, transcend his ignoble origins. The narrator adds to this perception when he notes that Sa'eed's "excessive politeness was not lost on me, for the people of our village do not trouble themselves with expressions of courtesy" (7). Here, the excessiveness of Sa'eed's affect draws attention to the behavior as performance and as an effort to hide his strange – or stigmatized – origins. Sa'eed may not have been *born* a "Gentleman" or be able to claim the distinction of blood, but desperately attempts to achieve that status through the performance of respectability.

The Absent Father; the Wandering Father

As I have been arguing, *Season* tells a story of Sa'eed detached from any ancestry; he does not actively claim the genealogy of his mother or his father except in a bureaucratic manner when he points to the names on his passport (18). However, as I have also been arguing, the historical memory of the mother and the father – the slave and the nomad – is repeated and remembered throughout the narrative and appears as

associations and resonances in the text. The mother and father are both absent and present in the course of the narrative. While the mother is present from the beginning of Sa'eed's life story, and must be actively disavowed, the father is excluded from the beginning, having died before Sa'eed is born.

The exclusion of the father again recalls depictions of slave identity in Sudan. Describing the situation of the slave in relation to fatherhood in Masalit society, Kapteijns writes: "Not only did the slave have no father (or was regarded as having none), he could also not become a father, since the children whom he begot belonged to the owner of his wife, who was often also his own master; these children could be, and often were, given away or sold" (48 – 49).[43] Depriving the slave of any claims to fatherhood facilitated a paternalistic ideology whereby the slave was integrated into, and reproduced for, the master's family.[44] Although neither Hosna nor her father is Sa'eed's master in a literal sense, we may interpret the situation metaphorically since Hosna's family does exert a benevolent power over Sa'eed. In fact, Wad Hamid and Hosna's family are arguably presented as Sa'eed's refuge from a past of imprisonment in England (a captivity) and aimless wandering (nomadism or fugitivity). Their "rescue" of Sa'eed ("saved" from the servility of prison, from rootless wandering, from colonialism itself) creates the conditions of possibility for the terms of "artificial kinship" or "pseudo-kinship" as that established between a slave and his manumittor (Marmon 15, 18). According to Marmon, the ex-slave was "eternally bound to him [the Master] and to his children by a profound sense of obligation for his or her 'resurrection' from the death of slavery" (16). The bonds of artificial kinship were in some ways stronger than that of a

blood kinsman, for the "fictional kinsman" felt a sense of obligation and gratitude greater than any blood kinsman, and furthermore was cut off from any other alternative kin networks.

The narrative also fulfills the condition that Sa'eed not *become* a father; he fails to reproduce with his partners in England, and although he has two sons with Hosna, he anticipates his disappearance by transferring all authority to the narrator who has secretly loved Hosna since childhood (104).[45] Although the narrator ultimately avoids marrying Hosna (117), he becomes the guardian of Sa'eed's two boys (103) and the transfer of authority raises questions as to Sa'eed's ability and right to integrate as husband and father, in the social senses, in the village. Sa'eed's disappearance enables the consolidation of village history and sanctions the structured exclusion of Sa'eed as acceptable village resident and father. But the community is not the only one judging Sa'eed's capacity as father; Sa'eed judges himself as inadequate to the role. In the letter he leaves the narrator, he explains that the lure of travel compels him to leave, and he also implores the narrator to protect his sons from wanderlust; that is to say, he asks the narrator to protect his sons from the nomad father and his nomadic legacy.

Although we can gain much from understanding Sa'eed's nomadism in terms of the migrancy of postcolonial intellectual, I am more interested in understanding what it means to situate Sa'eed within the memory of the earlier nomadism of his father's tribe, the 'Ababda, one tribe among the Beja, and how this nomadism has entered the imaginary of Sudan.[46] Observing what he called the "neighbors of the Bujja," tenth-century Arab geographer Maqdisi noted them as having neither marriage nor fathers

(Lewis 52), and as I will discuss, Maqdisi's observation is only one among a long archive of statements defining and evaluating the "strangeness" of the Beja. As I explained earlier in the History section, Sa'eed's father's origins lay on the northern fringes of the *bilad as-Sudan,* a borderland between what is now Upper Egypt and Sudan. Historically, the 'Ababda occupied not only a geographic borderland; they also occupied borderlands by virtue of their hybrid ethnicity and syncretic religiosity. In other words, their precarious and suggestive location as inhabitants of an intermediate space is reflected also in the intermediacy of their subject position. What I want to suggest here is that the 'Ababda's hybridity (geographic, ethnic, and religious) informs their historical liminality in Sudan and these aspects emerge as part of Sa'eed's characterization. In some important ways Sa'eed's connection to the 'Ababda remains rumor, mediated as it is by not only the narrator's re-telling, but by the hearsay of the Mamur who makes the initial comment (54), a comment that I cited to begin this chapter. However, as will become clearer, the indeterminancy of Sa'eed's origins merely repeats the very indeterminancy that characterizes the 'Ababda/Beja historically. Too, the ambivalence of successive states toward the nomadic subject is also reflected in the ambivalence of the narrator toward Sa'eed.

Historically, travelers and observers, learned men and colonial administrators, Muslim and Christian alike, have commented on the indeterminancy of Beja origins. Taken together and read critically, these statements are revealed as not simply observations of Beja physical appearance or attempts to fix a Beja ethnicity, but rather commentaries on the Beja's success or failure at performing a dominant Arab identity.

Bernard Lewis notes that the term "Bujja" or "Beja" first appeared among early Arabic references in geographers' and historians' accounts distinguishing among the peoples of Africa (50 – 51). Some Arab authors placed the Beja in an "intermediate" category in terms of race and respectability, in between the "Zanj" at the lower end and the Ethiopians at the top (51). In 1836, Joseph von Russegger reported of the Beja, "As a tribe, they claim Arab origin, apparently through their Sheikhs." He notes that they adopt the dress and habits of the fellahin, but "unlike true Arabs, the 'Ababda do not live in tents, but build huts with hurdles and mats, or live in natural caves, as did their ancestors in classic times" (34). As the outlines of a nation were drawn and scholars began to invest more energy into documenting Arab genealogies in Sudan, the Beja were targeted as a peripheral group insufficiently integrated into the Arabized center.[47] Interested in categorizing the various ethnic groups by assumed origin, some scholars favored emphasizing the Hamitic origin of the 'Ababda (see Holt and Daly 8), while others, such as Paul, preferred to "believe the tribal legends" which tell of an Arab genealogy. The Sudanese sections of the 'Ababda would "certainly claim to be pure Arabs," according to Paul, and for him, the legends of Kawahla descent from Zubeir ibn Awam killed at the Battle of Camel (143) was convincing in itself. In his 1912 book documenting the ethnological composition of Kordofan, H.A. MacMichael insists that the 'Ababda "are in great measure of Beja blood" (205).

The accusation of an impure Arabness, or unclear ethnicity, was often paired with an allegation of paganism or phony, insufficient, or incorrectly expressed, piety. After discussing the disputed origins of the 'Ababda, H.A. MacMichael adds a provocative

footnote elaborating on their name. "The singular of 'Ababda is 'Abadi and Bishariin Bishari" writes MacMichael and then continues: "'Abadi was also the word used to denote a Christian Arab, and Bishara means gospel or annunciation. Whether this is mere coincidence I do not know, but it is curious when one remembers that there was a Christian Kingdom at Dongola till about the fourteenth century" (205).[48] Observers have long accused the 'Ababda, and the Beja as a whole, of ambiguity and, in some cases, inauthentic performativity when it comes to matters of religion. As mentioned earlier in the history section, numerous verses in the Qur'an display a profound distrust of nomads, and directly criticize them for not supporting the Prophet or following the directive to migrate (Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh 38). Far from and outside the control of the center, nomadic groups were thought to be the ideal place for rebels and enemies to find protection. At times of civil war and unrest, nomadism became equated with the enemy order, and pejoratively with the pre-Islamic order (Khalid Masud 37). Khalid Masud argues, in fact, that the obligation to migrate (*hijra*) was instituted by elite sedentary Muslims in order to exert control over their nomadic counterparts (37).

The image of the "unMuslim" Beja continued on into the medieval period and was continually connected to their nomadic existence. Bernard Lewis notes the comments of eleventh-century qadi Sa'id al-Andalusi, who connects true civilization and the rule of law with sedentary culture and says: "[the only people] who diverge from this human order and depart from this rational association are some dwellers in the steppes and inhabitants of the deserts and wilderness, such as the rabble of Bujja, the savages of

Ghana, the scum of Zanj, and their like" (48). In his twelfth century chronicle of his travels, Ibn Jubayr includes this observation of the Beja:

> The people of 'Aydhab belong to a tribe of Sudanese called al-Bujat [Beja]. [T]his race from Sudan is more astray from the (right) path, and have less reason, than the animals. They have no religion save the formal words professing the unity of God, which they utter to display that they are Muslims. But behind that are corrupt beliefs and practices that cannot be condoned and are unlawful. Their men and women go naked abroad, wearing nothing but the rag which covers their genitals, and most not even this. In a word, they are a breed of no regard and it is no sin to pour maledictions upon them. (66)

Ibn Jubayr's characterization of the Beja as inauthentic Muslims and "a breed of no regard" is only confirmed by Ibn Battuta's reflections on them during his visit to 'Aydhab in 1326.

Taken together, these comments on the Beja serve to portray them as bestial, uncivilized, a "breed of no regard," qualities that are inextricably tied to their nomadism, and cryptically recall the characterization of Sa'eed as "nonentity." The Beja's different relation to land and property becomes a definitive trait that distinguishes them from the sedentary cultures that ultimately settle – and politically and economically control – Sudan. As I discussed earlier, the narrator begins the novel by producing a kind of pastoral, nostalgically linking himself (and his audience of Gentlemen) to the "immoveable property" of his grandfather's homestead. Later, the narrator confirms this identification with land and property in his utterance, "The fate of this house is bound up with that of the field" (72). On the other hand, although Mustafa Sa'eed settles in Wad Hamid, we are constantly reminded that he is not *from* there.

There are also depictions of nomads, who are called Bedouins in the novel, and these depictions suggestively recall the historical tropes I introduced above.[49] Moreover,

the depictions, I suggest, resonate with the depiction of the character of Mustafa Sa'eed. In all of the following cases, the Bedouin reveals him or herself to be selfish, greedy, untrustworthy, and disloyal to the village community. Interestingly, the first mention of a Bedouin in the novel occurs after the disappearance of Sa'eed. After a seven-month sojourn to the capital city of Khartoum (which was also once the residence of Sa'eed (10, 19)), the narrator returns home and is greeted by his family. As the narrator reacquaints himself with his family, he observes a black donkey he has not noticed before and inquires about it. His father responds with the following statement: "A Bedouin fellow cheated your uncle. He took from him the white donkey you know and five pounds as well" (63). Since no more is revealed about the exchange, we cannot know whether the Bedouin did indeed "cheat" the uncle, but the impression made is that the Bedouin's financial transaction and success in turning a profit is equated with thievery. The Bedouin's facility with cash recalls the distrust the grandfather expresses to the narrator regarding Sa'eed's cash purchase of home. In both cases, the ethos of individualism intrude upon the narrator's community and are equated with the Bedouin / nomad, and in a certain sense imply a seamlessness of the traditional ethos of the Bedouin and the new values of a capitalist era. That is, the depiction of the traditional Bedouin as stubbornly independent, eschewing the control of the state, are then mapped as ideal for the forging of a capitalist system, but counter for the formation of a national (village) community.

In the final depiction of a Bedouin, commodities come to the fore as extensions of the Bedouin body, and the narrator's encounter reveals his discomfort with the otherness of the nomad subject. In this scene, the narrator is traveling by lorry, and begins to feel

faint. As his mind wanders in the intensity of the desert heat, he becomes confused and intrusive thoughts of the black donkey, the cheating Bedouin and his uncle surface. Soon after, another Bedouin "the color of earth" (108) appears as if in a dream. After coarsely demanding tobacco, the Bedouin begins smoking, and the narrator observes at length:

> Never in my life have I seen a man smoke a cigarette with such gusto. Squatting down on his backside, the Bedouin began gulping in the smoke with indescribable avidity. After a couple of minutes he put out his hand and I gave him another cigarette, which he devoured as he had done the first. Then he began writhing on the ground as though in an epileptic fit, after which he stretched himself out, encircled his head with his hands, and went stiff and lifeless as though dead. All the time we were there, around twenty minutes, he stayed like this, until the engine started up, when he jumped to his feel – a man brought back to life – and began thanking me and asking Allah to grant me long life, so I threw him the packet with the rest of the cigarettes. Dust rose up behind us, and I watched the Bedouin running towards some tattered tents by some bushes southwards of us, where there were diminutive sheep and naked children. (109)

Here, the perception that is created is of a betrayal of the narrator's sense of propriety. Drawing a picture of an avid Bedouin that he intimates is also a mirage, the narrator inscribes the nomad as a liminal figure inhabiting a marginal space. Like the cheating Bedouin, who emerges in the narrator's memory as he has this new encounter, the avid Bedouin does not belong the village community, nor to any community discernable to the narrator. Occurring at a truck stop on the side of the road while he travel, the incident occurs in a transitory space, a marginalized space, a space which in the past may be uncontrolled by the center, but is now increasingly integrated into the road system and economic networks traversing the country. As a liminal figure, the Bedouin has license to behave in unsanctioned ways, but is also burdened with the performances of the irrational and somatic, and thus inhabits an uncontrolled body, the opposite of a rigorous and rational masculinity. It is true that the Bedouin obeys only the self, which may be read as

the epitome of the masculine subject, but the source of the desire in all cases may be interpreted as addiction – the overcoming of the self by irrational desire – or, in other words, the undermining of the masculine self. Thus, the Bedouin cheats, steals, smokes and gulps with avidity and gusto, writhes on the ground. The narrator's vision of the Bedouin proceeds from his preoccupations with carnality, bodily appetites, and greed, characteristics linked closely with what he learns of Mustafa Sa'eed. He learns of Sa'eed's uncontrolled and uncontrollable sexuality exhibited in a London den; he learns of Sa'eed's reliance on cash as a powerful mechanism that challenges the hold of family over land; he learns of Sa'eed's performance of piety, a performance the narrator does not entirely believe; and he learns of Sa'eed's wanderlust and ultimate detachment from any national sentiment, or *umma,* a community of believers. As a descendent of a slave and nomad, Sa'eed becomes for the narrator the embodiment of the breakdown of community and communal structures, structures that must be re-shaped and appropriated by the state in order for the dominant vision of "nation" to function.

Conclusion

Sa'eed's disappearance from the village generates rumors of his status and whereabouts (45 – 46). Although a body never materializes, the most widely circulating rumor is that of Sa'eed's death by drowning, a rumor reinforced by the narrator's words:

> Imagine: the height of summer in the month of fateful July; the indifferent river has flooded as never before in thirty years; the darkness has fused all the elements of nature into one single neutral one, older than the river itself and more indifferent. In such a manner the end of this hero had to be. (67)[50]

If we remember the narrator's earlier assertion of his solid belonging to the earth, and not the water ("I am not a stone thrown into the water but a seed sown in a field" (5)), we can better appreciate his anxiety around Sa'eed's rumored drowning, a drowning the narrator figures as fated ("had to be"). The ideology of the land, its implication of familial belonging and male lineage, is set in opposition to the ever-moving and rootless water. In the most elaborate story of Sa'eed's drowning in the Nile, his body "comes to rest in the bodies of the crocodiles infesting the waters" (46) and reverberates as myth. Significantly, it is a myth that has some historical grounding in Ottoman Sudan. In a chronicle of the Turkiyya, a European state official in the employ of the Ottoman regime, writes: "Even when he dies [a] slave is not accorded the charity of burial as Islamic law does not allow property to be buried" (Hill 37). Although we must recognize the ideological pressures shaping such a statement and read it with a critical eye, we may still gather from it the impression of the widespread existence of unburied slave corpses as a feature of the Ottoman landscape.[51] As we imagine Sa'eed's corpse floating in the river, it may not be too much of a stretch to recognize traces of what Sikainga writes about status of slave corpses at the end of the Ottoman era:

> There were districts in the Sudan where dead slaves were not even buried, as the owners refused to bear the expense: a London memorandum on the slave trade in the Sudan in 1878 reads: "the corpses of slaves were left exposed to scavenging animals or, if inconveniently located, thrown into the river. (*Slaves* xx)

Significantly, the idea of Sa'eed's dead body – even if purely imaginary – has certain effects on the narrator. It is immediately after the narrator hears of Sa'eed's disappearance and presumed death that he confesses to his audience of Gentlemen a "disturbing thought" that occurs to him:

> [t]hat Mustafa Sa'eed never happened, that he was in fact a lie, a phantom, a dream or a nightmare that had come to the people of that village one suffocatingly dark night, and when they opened their eyes to the sunlight he was nowhere to be seen. (46)

As he walks through the village at a liminal time and in a liminal space – just before dawn and among graves of villagers he has helped bury – the narrator considers the possibility of the unreality of Sa'eed, and he finds himself off-balance. Immediately upon learning of Sa'eed's presumed death, the narrator vacillates between agitation and relief, vertigo and determination, a reaction similar to his reaction upon seeing the secret room. It is much earlier when the narrator first meets Sa'eed that he accuses him of falsity and inauthenticity (15), but it is only after he learns of his disappearance that he feels suspended and ungrounded, haunted by the man's ghostly presence. Immersed in a liminal moment, the narrator loses sense of space and time (48) and experiences the earth and sky as indistinguishable. Just as it seems this feeling will overtake him, he hears his grandfather reciting the morning prayers (48) and tells his audience:

> Suddenly I felt my spirits being reinvigorated as sometimes happens after a long period of depression: my brain cleared and the black thoughts stirred up by the story of Mustafa Sa'eed were dispersed. Now the village was not suspended between sky and earth but was stable: the houses were houses, the trees trees, and sky was clear and faraway. Was it likely that what had happened to Mustafa Sa'eed could have happened to me? He had said that he was a lie, so was I also a lie? I am from here – is not this reality enough? I too had lived with them [the English]. But I had lived with them superficially, neither loving nor hating them. I used to treasure within me the image of this little village, seeing it wherever I went with the eye of my imagination (48 – 49).

On the verge of being absorbed by the myth of Mustafa Sa'eed, the narrator grasps at his attachment to a recoverable past in the image of his village and the ties with his nasab, and in doing so, becomes invulnerable to being "a lie." Listening to the prayers of his

grandfather, who he calls "immutable," the narrator feels grounded. He does not form a libidinal attachment to the English because he "treasured within" the image of the village; that is, unlike Sa'eed, he felt himself firmly rooted to a particularly geography and genealogy, a geography that, at least in the image he carries of it, is "real" and not yet reified and commodified by the penetration of capital. The narrator's very perception of himself as rooted in the village, surrounded by "immoveable property" and an extended family, is what distinguishes him from Sa'eed, accords him the authority to speak to his audience of Gentlemen, and promises him a different fate.

Still, Sa'eed's presence is disturbing enough to make an impact on the narrator, to disturb the grounds of his identity and the certainty of his rootedness, so much so that he is motivated to craft his tale. That is to say, it is important to recognize the element of desire that propels the relationship between the narrator and Sa'eed, and propels the narrative itself. Throughout the tale, the narrator is not simply repelled by Sa'eed and all he symbolizes; he is equally attracted by Sa'eed's presence and drawn helplessly into his story. As I have been suggesting, the narrator's inexorable voyage into the vortex of Sa'eed's life is illuminated through the recognition of the ways Sa'eed's parents mirror the historical and social cleavages of Sudan. As noted earlier, Mustafa Sa'eed's parents – the slave and the nomad – represent the geographical extremes of "South" and "North" in Sudan, and also symbolize the ideologies of servility and freedom that have been grafted onto these geographies.

The story of Sa'eed is indeed only one in an extensive store of Sudanese narratives that reveal the ambivalences around the slave figure, the bedouin, and the

Afro-Arab genealogies of the majority of Sudanese communities. Stories circulate around such figures as Bilal, a former slave from Ethiopia, who was the first muezzin (caller of the faithful to prayer) in Islam and a favorite of the Prophet Muhammad; Antar ibn Shaddan, the son of the slave woman, whose courageous adventures are handed down in a variety of genres; and Abu Zeid, who, unlike the rest of his people, the Arabs of Beni Hilal, was born black, grew up away from his father and the land of his paternal ancestors, and as a consequence suffered along with his mother, even as he triumphed and was rewarded (see Fluehr-Lobban *Islamic Societies* 131; Hurreiz *Jaaliyyin* 161). Even contemporary novels by Sudanese writers, such as *Seed of Redemption* by Francis Deng, features a descendent of a slave who is bestowed with abundant compassion and the powers of reconciliation. Furthermore, the significance of the Bedouin figure in Arabic literature not only in Sudan, but more generally, should not be underestimated. Stetyvych has demonstrated the strategies by which the early Islamic community appropriated the narrative techniques and poetry of the pre-Islamic Bedouin in order to consolidate power and legitimate the new authority. Season gestures toward the importance of the nomad/Bedouin by having the narrator employed to teach pre-Islamic literature upon his arrival back in Sudan (57). While in London, Sa'eed lectures on the poet Abu Nuwas (d. 813 – 815), an important and controversial figure from the Abbasid period (143 – 145). Sa'eed's knowingly misrepresents Abu Nuwas as a Sufi mystic (143) and says he uses intoxication as a symbol of love for the Divine, but what we know of Abu Nuwas from the historical record accords more closely with the way Sa'eed is characterized in the *Season.* For example, Abu Nuwas' wine poetry celebrates decadence

and sensuality, an ethos that is amply displayed in the both of Sa'eed's secret rooms. Abu Nuwas is also known for his hunt poetry, an apt metaphor for Sa'eed's perpetual quest for women and a place for belonging, but also for the narrator's quest for Sa'eed. However, Abu Nuwas is significant to us for other reasons that go to the question of Sa'eed's paternal lineage. Firstly, according to historical record, Abu Nuwas never knew his father and was sold to a shopkeeper by his mother. Secondly, although Abu Nuwas lived during the imperial Abbasid era, the second generation of Islamic community, according to tradition, he lived for a year among the Bedouins in order to purify his knowledge of Arabic, eventually re-integrating back into the center of Islamic civilization.

Whereas many of the stories noted above articulate a powerful ideology of community and/or national unity, the story of Mustafa Sa'eed, as told in *Season,* is more ambivalent. It might be tempting to argue that, like the folk tales and oral narratives, the figures of the slave and the nomad as traces within Mustafa Sa'eed's character are absorbed and appropriated into the community upon his disappearance, and that Wad Hamid is strengthened by this influx of the disparate geographies and temporalities. However, as already stated, Sa'eed's disappearance catalyzes Hosna's defiance which leads to the further disintegration of the community through her murder of Wad Rayyes and her suicide. It appears, then, that the latent energies of Sa'eed's ancestry awaken impulses toward individualization that fracture and disunify the community. Still, the narrator is emboldened at the very end of the narrative, as he struggles in the Nile, just as Sa'eed is thought to have perished. Yet, instead of succumbing to the river, he is re-animated and expresses his desire to continue to live. Notably, this desire is at first

articulated as a desire for a cigarette, as powerful and avid a desire as the nomad is said to have displayed in the earlier scene in the desert, a desire that repulsed the narrator.

Season of Migration to the North tells the tale of the narrator's return to postcolonial Sudan, and more specifically to the village of Wad Hamid, and as I argue throughout this chapter, the presence of Mustafa Sa'eed in the village introduces a history of plunder, dislocation and commodification that is otherwise disavowed or suppressed. The narrator opens the book with his own tale of migration, but, as I have already suggested, this tale is quickly displaced by the multiple tales of migration told by Mustafa Sa'eed. Viewing it in this way opens the space to consider the narrator's own disavowed desires, desires that can only be voiced through the peripheral and unlawful – but also mythical and revered – figures of the slave and nomad. Notably, as the narrator fights to stay afloat in the Nile river, and just after he makes a decision to live, he thinks to himself: "If I am unable to forgive, then I shall try to forget" (169). These lines are not further elaborated upon, but I suggest that it is significant that the aim of forgetting is made central to the narrator's consciousness. In order to live "by force and cunning" (169) in the newly fashioned capitalist economy and with an attenuated power of the extended family, the narrator must appropriate elements of Sa'eed's kinlessness, and, in fact, elements of the precolonial figures of the slave and nomad, but, he must simultaneously forget these appropriations.

Embedded in the narrator's tale of return are references to the passing of his cherished, ancient, harraz wooden doors (70) and the concomitant proliferation of iron doors – significantly the iron door of Sa'eed's secret room (70, 135) – references that

become also signals of a new spatial, political, financial and relational economy. As I suggest throughout this chapter, Mustafa Sa'eed's kinlessness emerges as a new identity and a symbol of the new economy. The two secret rooms, one of which is called "a mausoleum" by the narrator, are full of objects and written texts that become a substitute for Sa'eed's precolonial and colonial genealogies. The secret room's positioning as "mausoleum" and library points to its efficacy in effecting an erasure of oral memory carried by the nomad and the slave, two subjects marginalized by the state's use of Arabic in the service of state-building. Sa'eed's kinlessness and all it symbolizes serves as a threat to the familial order represented by the narrator, a "threat" about which he is ultimately ambivalent. Gazing into a mirror while in Sa'eed's secret room, the narrator wrestles with the images that appear before him, imagining first Sa'eed's face and then the outlines of his own, indicating a confusion of boundaries and the element of identification and desire that conflictingly ties him to Sa'eed. Significantly, when the image settles, the mirror reflects back to the narrator an image of his singular face – a mark of individuality separate from his father, grandfather, extended family and homestead (135). It is this mark of individuality – this fantasy of kinlessness – that Sa'eed bequeaths to the narrator, and it is this kinlessness, the lure of unattached and unobligated individualism, that the narrator both fears and desires.

[1] Denys Johnson-Davies consulted with Tayeb Salih in preparing the English version of *Mawsim,* and his translation is now accepted as authoritative. See an informative interview with Johnson-Davies, conducted by Egyptian literary critic Ferial Ghazoul (Johnson-Davies "On Translating Arabic Literature"). All citations are from the most recent Penguin edition of Johnson-Davies' translation, unless otherwise specified. I will refer to the novel as *Season* for the remainder of this chapter.

[2] British administrators and colonial officials were stationed in Sudan during the Ottoman Empire, most famously General Charles Gordon, who was eventually killed in Khartoum by the Sudanese Mahdi. The

British never recovered from this defeat and there was great public support for the Reconquest, accomplished in 1898 under General Kitchener. For more history, see Alice Moore-Harell, *Gordon and the Sudan: Prologue to the Mahdiyya* (2001).

[3] Marmon uses al Barbati's assessment of the slave as "legally dead" to argue that the concept of the slave in Islamic law resonates deeply with Orlando Patterson's concept "social death" elaborated upon in his influential study of slavery *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (1982) (Marmon 1).

[4] In his *A History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan* (1954), A. Paul identifies four major groups as Beja: the Arteiga, the 'Ababda, the Halenga, and the Fellata Melle (v). The editors of the Historical Dictionary of the Sudan (Second Edition, 1992) claim that the modern Beja subgroups emerged in the last few centuries and identifies the Sudanese groups as the 'Ababda, the Amarar, the Bisharin, the Beni Amer, and the Hadendowa (32 – 33). Also see Voll (11).

[5] I will elaborate on the connotative meanings of the term "Gentlemen" as well as the original Arabic "sadati" in my close reading.

[6] Historian Eve Troutt Powell calls Egypt a "colonized colonizer." For more on Egypt's ambiguous role in empire, see Eve M. Troutt Powell's *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain and the Mastery of the Sudan* (2003) and Jacob (2005).

[7] When I say "university classroom" I mean primarily in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe, since "postcolonialism" as a professional field has been shaped in this milieu.

[8] Heinemann 1969; Penguin 2003.

[9] There are many sources one could consult on the debates over postcolonial studies. One particularly useful and comprehensive source is *The Preoccupation of Postcolonial Studies* (2000). One of the editors of this volume states in her introductory essay, "[t]he field of postcolonial studies is at present beset by a melancholia induced paradoxically by its newfound authority and incorporation into institutions of higher learning." For more, see Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, "At the Margins of Postcolonial Studies: Part I." Also see Anne McClintock's essay reviewing the contested history of the word "postcolonialism."

[10] Journalist Mona Anis reported on the event for Al Ahram Weekly, and observed the controversies attending the award since Egyptian novelist Sonallah Ibrahim's refusal to accept the honor in 2003, labeling it as "worthless." An unnamed source is quoted as saying about Salih as the award recipient, "It's like awarding it to Mahfouz. Either you give it to him in the first round to raise the profile of the award, or he is above the competition." Salih, who had served as head of the jury when Ibrahim was chosen, accepted the award graciously, and Mona Anis implies that the Egyptian Ministry of Culture carefully orchestrated the event.

[11] Sa'eed's birthdate is recorded in the novel (18), however, his date of disappearance can only be approximated, and Hassan, who draws up a timeline of all of the major events in the novel, suggests he disappears sometime around 1953 (*Tayeb* 185).

[12] In his critical essay, As'ad Khairallah does not explicitly use the word "migration" (or hijra) but indirectly addresses the multifaceted term when he examines the function of the metaphor of travel by analyzing the narrator's caravan across the desert in chapter seven of the novel (95 – 112).

[13] Although the novel is part of Salih's "Wad Hamid Cycle," *Season* in widely acknowledged as his "best known work" and is often read and understood independently of the other texts (Tayeb 82).

[14] Hassan's chapter is a revised version of a chapter of his dissertation. See Hassan

[15] In an earlier article, Harlow acknowledges al-Hakim's *Birds from the East* and Haqqi's *The Saint's Lamp* as "literary antecedents" of *Season* ("Othello's" 161).

[16] On the impact the crisis in Palestine had on his writing, also see, "Interview with El Tayeb Salih on Voice of America in Arabic" in Berkley, Constance, pp. xxxix – xxxx.

[17] As will soon become clear, the phrase "multiple marginality" is taken from the title of a paper, "The multiple marginality of the Sudan" delivered by Professor Ali Mazrui at the 1968 conference "Sudan in Africa" whose proceedings were then published in book form. See Yusuf Fadl Hasan, Ed. *Sudan in Africa*.

[18] In an earlier interview, Salih comments "[T]he Sudan has not really produced as much as it could. But it has potential. I am not saying that because I am Sudanese, but because of the different cultural influences, the traditions, the Christian period, the oral tradition, the Sufi religious tradition and all sorts of other things. It's an ideal place for anybody to create" (Berkley xxxx).

[19] In his dissertation, Ahmad Musa Harb aims to apply archetypal criticism to the novel, and employs Freudian and Jungian theory.
[20] In her review of Heather Sharkey's book on Sudanese nationalism, Kapteijns argues that Sharkey's timeline is too shallow, and that a more accurate accounting of colonialism (and, by extension, nationalism) in Sudan must include the Ottoman era, and not only the British regime.
[21] Sondra Hale tells us "The 'Turks' tried to force upon the people a rigidly and formally doctrinaire Islam promulgated by al-Azhar University-educated religious scholars" (Gender 64). She argues that this literate, doctrinaire Islam was patriarchal in character and subverted Sudan's Sufi, more populist, less-hierarchically structured Islam.
[22] Johnson clearly spells out the connections among historical eras in Sudan relative to current events. He writes that the "origins of the Sudan's current problems predate the unequal legacy of the colonial system in the twentieth century. They can be found in the ideas of legitimate power and governance developed in the Sudanic states of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which were incorporated into the structures of the Turco-Egyptian empire, achieved new force in the jihad state of the Mahidiyya, and were never fully replaced, but rather occasionally adapted by the twentieth century colonial state" (*Root Causes* 7).
[23] Hale makes the point that the slave trade was a state monopoly until 1850, at which time the Turco-Egyptians and riverain merchants left the trading mostly to nomadic Sudanese (*Gender* 65).
[24] Although women were captured and sent North as well, they were less visible because they were quickly integrated into the domestic sphere of Northern homes and oftentimes married to Northern men. Southern men, in contrast, were barred from marrying Muslim, Northern women. In his book on slavery, Sikainga notes, "Theoretically a male slave could marry a free woman, but this was discouraged in practice" (Slaves 5).
[25] The emergence of Christian identity as a complex identity of resistance in Sudan is significant to my analysis of the theater of Kwoto in Chapter Two.
[26] Those residing outside the confines of dar al-Islam, or those within its boundaries who did not submit to official Muslim authority, such as nomads, were potential targets of war and enslavement (Aldeeb Abu Sahlieh 38; also see Khaled Masud 37). Of course, various jurists interpreted the conditions of dar al-Islam, dar al-kufr, and dar al-harb differently, and interpretations also changed over time.
[27] See A. Paul, (37). I will elaborate upon this in my analysis of the character of Mustafa Sa'eed later in this chapter.
[28] For more on precolonial formations among the Beja, it is useful to consult poetry and folk traditions. See Uhaj, *Min turath al-Buja al-sha'bi* (Beja Folk Traditions) and Morin, "Mimetic traditions in Beja Poetry from Sudan."
[29] As Hale notes, "The Turco-Egyptians patronized the Khatmi order (Mirghani family) – whose adherents included many northeastern groups such as Nubians, Kassala Arabs, and especially the Shaygiyya Arabs – at the expense of other orders and social groups" (67). She adds, "This favoritism created a religious and political cleavange between the Mahdists (Ansar) and Khatmis that still influences Sudanese religious and ethnic relations today" (67).
[30] Interested in maintaining some control over their territory and dominance over competing groups, other Beja tribes accepted similar concessions as they recognized they could not totally evade Turkish authority. For example, the Bishariyyin took control of the trade routes between Berber and Suakin and the Kababish guided travelers between Kordofan and Dongola (Moore-Harrell 121)
[31] Muhammad Ahmed el Mahdi proclaimed his divine mission in May 1881. The town of El Obeid fell under Mahdist control in 1883, and Gordon's death in 1885 signaled the beginning of the Mahdist state.
[32] MacMichael (1912) also writes about the internal machinations of the Beja during the Mahdiyya.
[33] Of course, a significant event in this historical narrative is the defeat and death of General Charles Gordon (1820 – 1885) at the hands of the Mahdist insurgents, an event that was later transfigured into a collective loss for Imperial Britain and used as justification for the Reconquest (the Anglo-Egyptian regime 1898 – 1956). For more on Gordon and the Mahdists, see __. For more on Gordon in the context of Victorian masculinities, see Herbert Sussman's *Victorian Masculinities* (1995).
[34] Colonial officials also attempted to shape nomads into wage laborers. Sikainga (1996) mentions one attempt to recruit Beja as dockworkers, an effort that was deemed a failure (68).

[35] Historian Ann Mosely Lesch confirms that indirect rule throughout Sudan led to the enhancement or even outright creation of the authority of tribal leaders, and to the artificial search for "lost tribes and vanished chiefs" (29).

[36] On the Beja in the contemporary period, see Lobban (33), Johnson (34, 137 – 138) and Verney (27 – 28). On the history of the Beja Congress, a modern political movement, see Awhaj, *Mu'tamar al Baja: al-madi wa al-hadir, 1958 – 2005* (Beja Congress: the past and the present) and Johnson, Root Causes (104, 130, 138). There are numerous studies of the South in the contemporary period. For example, see Jok, Johnson. In recent years, more work has been done on the role of slavery and slave identity in contemporary Sudan. See Idris and Jok.

[37] Eventually, the mutineers joined with others to form the Anyanya, a guerilla army. By 1957, the Southern bloc began building coalitions with "African" groups in the north, including the Beja (O' Balance 47). For more, see *The Root Causes* by Johnson (27). Although things improved somewhat for those living in Sudan's peripheries, leading to a reprieve of war from 1972 – 1982, the resumption of civil war in 1983 brought new attention to the inequities. In 1989, the National Islamic Front (NIF) came to power by coup and is still ruling today. According to many scholars and other observers, the NIF instituted policies and programs that were hostile to minorities and peripheral groups in Sudan. For example, according to Peter Verney, the National Islamic Front were "alarmed by the Beja's pride in their ancient culture and tradition, which is considered incompatible with the regime's emphasis on an Arab-Islamic identity" (28). The institution of shar'ia as state law by Nimeiri in 1983, and the forwarding of new policies by the NIF led to the resumption of civil war by the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) (see Johnson *Root Causes*)

[38] In light of the importance of the acacia tree to the narrator, it is perhaps interesting to note the significance of the acacia tree to Sudanese trade history and political economy. Acacia trees flourish in the semi-arid areas of sub-Saharan Africa, and are especially known to the gum belt, which stretches from Sudan to Nigeria. The resin of the acacia tree is known for its role in producing Gum Arabic, a highly valuable contemporary commodity (Sudan's most important export commodity) and historically significant. Babiker Mahmoud writes that even before the British colonial period, Sudan was the world's major producer of Gum (34). During the ancient Egyptian period, Gum Arabic was used in cosmetics, in inks for hieroglyphics, as an adhesive for painting and to help with the mummification process. The product was traded during the Ottoman era when it was named "Turkey Gum." In modern times, Gum Arabic is used in a variety of products and industries, including pharmaceutical, chemical, and the food and beverage industries, as well as in fine arts, restoration, hobbies and leather processing. The Acacia tree and the industry of Gum Arabic enjoyed some New York Times headline coverage recently when the ongoing violence in Dar Fur threatened to hinder the collection and distribution of the valuable resin. The product is considered so essential (used in such global products as Coca-Cola and Pepsi) that the Gum Arabic industry was exempt from the United States economic embargo on Sudan. For more on Gum Arabic's history and role in the contemporary period see, (Babiker Mahmoud 34 – 36; Lacey A1; Purcell 25 – 27).

[39] Writing in 1972 about the 1947 turn toward integration, Francis Deng comments: "The policy of separate development was abandoned in 1947 and replaced by an integrative policy. This new policy, it would seem, was not aimed at unification; it was based on predictive unity. Under the policy, contact with the North was intensified while the British supervised. The Southerner came closer to the Northerner in their common struggle to rid their country of colonial domination. The average Dinka could go into the city and become more exposed to Arab influence; prior to that, going to Arabland brought great shame on a Dinka and invited insult songs. Although migration to the North is still considered not noble, it has become more accepted and is sometimes honored in songs as an economic venture by the traditionally disadvantaged factions of society" (15)

[40] According to Marmon, slaves were issued half the punishment of free subjects (33)

[41] Before the Turkiyya, Sudanese Muslim communities most often followed Maliki traditions, brought to Sudan by West African pilgrims making the hajj to Mecca. During the Ottoman occupation, Hanafi law became institutionalized through Shari'a courts. In some cases, Maliki law co-existed with Hanafi law and, according to Fluehr-Lobban, "laid the foundation for the twentieth century choices between the two which have characterized changes and development in the Shari'a in the past sixty years" (Islamic Law 30).

[42] In the postcolonial period, Kafa'a has come under more scrutiny in Sudan and has been challenged in court, especially as women have achieved more autonomy in the marriage process. Fleuhr-Lobban notes two important moments in the history of Kafa'a: first, in 1973 a woman went to court to affirm her right to marry her chosen partner after her father attempted to block the marriage based on his assessment that the man was not of equal status due to his ancestry (he was the alleged grandson of a slave). The Shari'a High Court decided in favor of the woman, concluding that "Islam recognizes the equality of all people and that 'there is no preference between an Arab and non-Arab except by his God-fearing' (131). Second, in 1991, Personal Status Law removed pedigree and genealogy as a condition restricting marriage (131, also see Fleuhr-Lobban, "Personal Status Law" (117). Fleuhr-Lobban also mentions the increasing importance of "practice of religion" and "good morals" as a criterion for a suitable mate – a condition that may be defined in ways that continue to promote endogamy as preferable. On the other hand, in her 2004 book on women and Islamization in contemporary Sudan, Salma Ahmed Nageeb mentions emerging ideologies in contemporary Sudan that support marriage to "garaba" – a local term referring to those from western Sudan's ethnic groups, or those with an imputed African origin, as opposed to an Arab one. Nageeb quotes one middle-aged woman as saying, "What is important today is money. If you have money you can marry whom you want. He [the bridegroom] had to pay that much, garbawi who wants to marry bitt al-balad. These days people marry anything as long as they have money and who has money these days? Garaba. Poor awlad al-balad, they have no chance with naas tala jadiid" (15). Nageeb's discussion points out the continuing stigma of an imputed "African" origin, and the continuing value of a label of "bitt / awlad al-balad" (girls / sons of the country – or Arab Sudanese), but also the ways the stigma is compensated for or partially erased in a capitalist economy that introduces new values in the marriage economy.

[43] The absence of the father is notable in depictions of the slave subject in other literary traditions. For example, in his discussion of the role of fathers and the slave subject in Yoruba literary tradition, Adéèkó quotes a proverb, "The slave too has a father, although his location may be far" (134).

[44] Shaun Marmon notes that the two methods most often used to integrate slaves into local community were apprenticeship and marriage (30 – 31).

[45] In her article "Cultural Hybridity and Contamination in Tayeb Salih's *Mawsim al-hijra ila Shamal*," Patricia Geesey links Sa'eed's apparent sterility in London (the fact that he never reproduces despite his promiscuity) to the novel's appropriation of the colonialist idea of the infertility of "hybrid species" (132).

[46] The term "nomad" and its variants are prevalent in contemporary literary theoretical discourse, but, as literary critic and Africanist Christopher Miller points out, the theoretical appropriation of "nomad" too often erases its material and historical reality of nomadism in African and Middle Eastern contexts. Miller debates the Gilles Deleuze's concept of "nomadology" and the uses to which it is put with Holland in an issue of Research in African Literatures. Nina Berman also includes an informative footnote in her essay on Salim Alafenisch (1998) that traces some of the important texts and debates around the appropriation of the concept of "nomadism" by contemporary literary theory.

[47] Refer back to my history section for more on the Arabization of the Beja and 'Ababda in Sudan.

[48] It is also interesting to note that the root of 'Ababda is "a, b, d" which recalls "abd," the word for slave.

[49] The terms nomad and Bedouin are used interchangeably in scholarship on the Middle East and Africa. Season's English translation employs the term "bedouin" which recalls the Arabic term "bedu."

[50] The narrator begins one chapter asserting Sa'eed's death, but admitting uncertainty as to how: "In any case, he died, by drowning or by suicide – God alone knows" (61). The fact is, however, that nothing in the book assures us that Sa'eed is definitively dead. We know only that he is no longer in Wad Hamid.

[51] The contemporary editor of the Ottoman chronicle puts into the question the accuracy of the statement, suggesting that the writer misinterpreted Islamic law with the purpose of discrediting Ottoman rule. The existence of slave corpses is not put into question, only the reasons and motivations for such methods of disposal.

Chapter Two:

"Summarizing the South":

Staging Kinship and Unity

in select plays by

The Kwoto Cultural Center

The movement from the last chapter to the present one entails a movement from novel to theater, from literacy to orality, from postcolonial canon to popular genres, and from the individual to the collective.[1] While in the last chapter, I singled out for investigation one novel from among Tayeb Salih's works, in this chapter, I argue that the work of the Kwoto Cultural Center, a southern Sudanese non-profit theater troupe in Khartoum, Sudan, is best understood as a corpus, and so I analyze four plays, selected both for the way they dramatize the transformation of kinship in the contemporary period and for their representativeness of the performance styles and genres adopted by the troupe (see Appendix B: Kwoto's Plays, 2002). The movement from the individual to the collective is visible on the level of form (the single novel vs. the repertoire) and mode of production (the individual author vs. varied degrees of group authorship) as well as content; that is, the plays themselves dramatize the negotiation between communal identity and individuation in the contemporary urban capitalist marketplace. In both

Kwoto's plays and practices, the movement from the "individual" to the "collective" (or vice versa) is not presented as a simple, teleological progression or a one-way avenue, but instead as an ambivalent, unstable negotiation. The desire for the "communal" in Kwoto's work is rooted in precolonial histories and ideologies, but is elaborated upon through selective affiliations to Christianity, the methods of theater of the oppressed and agitprop, and new class identifications in the urban environment. Significantly, although the "collective" is in many ways presented as an aspiration and a destination, the plays and some of the group's practices equally demonstrate the allure of individualism as a competing ideology, one which is neither completely rejected nor wholly embraced. Ultimately, Kwoto stages multiple and contradictory versions of the displaced southerner in the urban north, and invites multiple possible readings depending on an auditor's/ interpreter's social position, theoretical orientation and geographic location. As I will demonstrate in my analyses, Kwoto's plays draw on and reflect the contested historical memory of Sudan and its layered imperial contexts. Even as one of Kwoto's stated aims is to stage the "unity" of Sudan, I argue that the performances register competing points of view and attest to the complex negotiations of Sudan's multiple inheritances.

In this chapter, I develop a reading of Kwoto's plays and practices that highlights their preoccupation with the transformation of kinship in the context of relations among specific ethnic groups, among southerners and between southerners and those are to different degrees external to that community, including the ancestors, northerners, Westerners, aid workers and international donor organizations, the Arabic-speaking world, diasporic Sudanese, and transnational blacks. Yet, as I will argue, Kwoto's play-

texts, performances and rehearsal activities do not merely "reflect" relations between and among the groups noted above; rather, their plays, performances and activities contribute to the continual recreation and re-definition of alliances between and among various groups. As I will discuss, for example, the "pan-Southern nation" has been an object of aspiration during the tenure of Kwoto's existence, but not yet a social or political reality. Moreover, since at least 1991, the pan-Southern nation has been threatened from within by internal disagreements, conflicts and inter- and intra-ethnic warfare. Therefore, Kwoto's staging of "southernness" and active invocation of a "Southern" audience as a unified entity, has been a deliberate attempt to posit a pan-Southern nation in order to help bring it into existence. Kwoto director Derik Uya Alfred emphasized that when Kwoto talked about the "south" they were "talking about the *people,* not the political face of the south" (Personal Interview), and further proudly related a compliment he received from a Dinka intellectual: "You (Kwoto) summarize the South" (Personal Interview). By performing "southernness" in the *north,* however, Kwoto interestingly grapples with the intersections and conflations of ethnic, class, urban and occupational identities as well as historical definitions of the "south" and "southernness" and therefore intervenes in the reinvention of what it means to be "southern."

The Kwoto Cultural Center (*Markez Kwoto al-Thaqafi*) has been operating a traveling theater troupe and a cultural center since 1994 in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan and was known as Kwoto Popular Theater Troupe until 2002. The directors describe their productions as "theater on wheels" and the troupe generally travels by rented bus from their headquarters to their destinations throughout Sudan (see Figure 1).

Kwoto was founded by three friends and theater artists: Al Samani Lual Aro, who became the President, Derik Uya Alfred, who became the Managing Director, and Stephen Affear Ochalla, who took on the responsibilities of Artistic Director. All three founders were born and spent their early years in the south, but were living in Greater Khartoum, also known as the "Three Towns" – Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman – by the mid-1980s, a few years after the resumption of civil war in the South in 1983, when many southerners felt compelled to leave to seek refuge or employment and educational opportunities. By 2002, the Center had four directors, ages 35 – 40 (a Managing Director, an Artistic Director, a Director of Audiovisual Communications, and a Student Affairs Director) and approximately 24 performers/members, ages 16 – 35 (13 males; 11 females) (Appendix A: List of Kwoto Personnel, 2002). Derik Uya Alfred, one of the current directors, is a graduate of the prestigious Institute of Music and Drama (IMD) and the other directors have studied or practiced drama informally or with Church-related organizations. Membership has remained steady at about 25 – 40, fluctuating somewhat due to competing obligations for performers such as schooling and military enlistment for the boys.[2] To become a member, one must go through an audition process and complete a trial period; membership is voluntary and unpaid, except for a nominal amount for bus fare, communal lunches and when possible small amounts toward book and school fees. In their promotional materials, Kwoto's directors define Kwoto as a non-profit theater troupe and cultural center dedicated to promoting, preserving, and "animating" the diverse cultures of the southern Sudanese and Nuba ("Kwoto Portfolio" 3). At its inception, Kwoto was supported by the Ford Foundation (1993 – 1997). The

Foundation awarded the troupe $50,000 a year from 1994 – 1996 and $73,000 in 1997 to support their efforts to start a "multi-lingual theatre group among the displaced young students in Khartoum" ("Kwoto's History" 2) with the following objectives:

i. Strengthening the southerners' identity through animation of their cultures artistically (drama, music and dances) as a contribution to the National Sudanese culture
ii. Adopting the southerners' vernaculars as the medium of the theatre with the notion of uplifting and developing these vernaculars
iii. Making use of theater as an open university which contributes to the socio-economic development of the southern communities
iv. Creating a suitable atmosphere among young talented southerners to congregate among themselves and develop their talents
v. Dramatize information connected with health-care, childhood, domestic space, to help raise the living standard of the displaced population in collaboration with local and international NGOs. (Kwoto's History" 2)[3]

The main methods by which they attempt to reach their goals are by maintaining a cultural center with a library and schedule of events, by staging plays and dances for multiple audiences within Sudan and internationally, and by distributing video and audio cassettes of their music and performances. In materials produced for funding purposes, they list as their main beneficiaries "the displaced Southerners in the North, as well as the entire Southern Sudanese" but in a later section assert definitively that their aim is "thus promoting unity, amongst not only Sudanese of the south, but of all Sudanese" (5). Kwoto's dramatic repertoire ranges from plays that may be categorized as theater-for-development (TfD) and agitprop, to dramas based on local themes related to war and displacement, including rural-urban migration, ethnic divisions and ethno-nationalism, gender and generational tensions, to adaptations from literary drama. These plays take the form of short skits (called *sketch* or *irtijal* [improvisation]) (10 – 15 minutes) and longer (usually one-act, 20 – 40 minutes) scripts (called *nas*). They refer to their

performances as *'ard* (performance/display), *masra* (theater), to their dances as *raqs* (dance) and themselves as *fanan* (artist). Stated succinctly for now, Kwoto's theater traverses boundaries of several discrete categories of theater; although the directors incorporate some methods and exercises from Augusto Boal's theater of the oppressed (TO) into rehearsals, the final performances I witnessed were more often than not staged as final products – with some planned improvisation between actors – rather than open-ended dialogues with the audience. Classified as a non-profit, Kwoto is committed to providing their shows for free for the displaced people who comprise their target audiences; however, they engage in theater as a commercial enterprise as well, performing for paying clients such as hotels, student groups and government emissaries. Certain of Kwoto's plays fit the genre of theater for development with the directors often choosing the topics, sometimes with input from members or the community, sometimes with input or solicitation from an NGO. The directors write the plays or develop the ideas, rehearse with the company and perform for audiences. Other plays are better described as original compositions based on local themes or literary adaptations, and all of the directors prioritized the aesthetics and artistic elements of every production. With both educative, entertainment and development aims, Kwoto's theater and dance repertoire utilize indigenous and foreign modes of cultural expression to address the material conditions of subaltern southerners in Khartoum. The song and dance repertoire includes traditional genres of cattle praise songs, warrior songs, courtship songs, songs celebrating the investiture of the Shilluk king, among others (Appendix C: Kwoto Songs and Dances, 2002). Due to the fact that the plays are unpublished and unavailable to my

readers, and are set within deep historical and cultural contexts, I delay my readings of the actual play texts in order to first offer an overview of performance traditions in Sudan. Due to the centrality of the dances, I do include the category of dance in my overview, and incorporate some preliminary observations on the role of the dances and the relationship of the dances to the plays where relevant. My aim in my readings is not to evaluate the relative "success" of Kwoto's theater as a form of theater for development or "theater for conscientization" (Boal Theatre; Mda 18 – 23). Rather, I read Kwoto's scripts and plays for what they can tell us about the social imaginary in Khartoum from the perspective of one long-standing, well-known cultural institution formed by southerners. For the movement from the last chapter to this one is also a movement from a cultural product written by a northern Sudanese to those written and performed by southerners in the north.

As mentioned above, Kwoto was conceptualized at a time when many southern Sudanese were newly negotiating their position as "displaced people" in the North of Sudan. All of the directors and some of the members of Kwoto lived much of their lives in the south and migrated to the north in the 1980s; others of the members were born in Greater Khartoum (Appendix A). In the early stages of Kwoto's activities, the organization did not have permanent offices. The group rehearsed in a variety of spaces, including the Actor Association in Omdurman, the Youth Centre of Omdurman and Comboni Playground. After moving regularly, the directors desired a more permanent space. At first, Kwoto established itself in a small office in Omdurman, but by 1997, they moved their headquarters to Abu Sin street, Khartoum East, in close proximity to offices

of the British Council. By 2002, Kwoto was still in Khartoum, but moved a few streets away. In their funding applications, Kwoto's directors expressed their desire to be in the "city centre, Khartoum" ("Kwoto's History" 9). Significantly, although Kwoto's offices were located in Khartoum, no member lived in Khartoum, which is known as the "colonial" city, founded as it was by Muhammad Ali in 1820, sacked when the Mahdists came to power in 1885 – 86, and rebuilt by Kitchener following the Reconquest in 1898. Many note that Khartoum is the "European city" while recognizing Omdurman, the capital during the Mahdist era, as the "African" or "indigenous" city (Hamdan "The Growth" 24). Geographer Hamdan describes Khartoum as "the office" due to its function as an administrative center, Omdurman as the "home" due to its role as the residence of the people, and Khartoum North as the "workshop" due to its development as the industrial heart of Sudan ("The Growth" 24).

According to United Nations (U.N.) sources, Greater Khartoum has grown from 500,000 in 1956, the year of independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, to 1.8 million in 1983, 3.5 million in 1993, and 4.4 million in 1998 (Loveless 7; also see Lobban *Historical* 107 – 112). Members of the Committee of the Civil Project in Sudan note three historical conditions that have not only encouraged but promoted large-scale migrations: 1.) nineteenth century war, slavery and Mahdist era policies; 2.) agricultural schemes in the North (in particular, the Gezira Scheme, one of the world's largest planned settlements) drawing migrant labor from among peripheral populations; and 3.) the concentration of national income-generating activities and economic opportunities in Khartoum, and the disparity in development across regions. In addition to these factors,

natural disasters, manmade disasters and war-induced famine have forced populations to uproot and resettle (Ajawin and de Waal *When Peace* 177). Since the second civil war (1983 – 2002), however, displacement due to war violence inarguably played a major role in population movement. Many researchers have noted that in the twentieth century, Sudan's populations have proportionately experienced the greatest levels of internal displacement than any other nation (Cohen and Deng *Masses* 5; Ruiz "The Sudan" 139). According to Loveless, as of 1998, it was estimated that 1.8 were "displaced" with approximately 250,000 living in four official displaced camps (7).[4]

"Internally displaced persons" or IDPs is the official phrase and acronym used by the U.N. and NGOs since the early 1980s to name people who are compelled to move from their homes due to war and environmental disaster but who do not cross international boundaries, in which case they receive the label of "refugee" (Ruiz "The Sudan" 139).[5] IDPs in Sudan are known as *nazih* (pl. *naziheen*), a standard Arabic term referring to one who migrates from one place to another. Although international law attempts to discriminate between economic migrants and the internally displaced, and those who are "forced" to move versus those who "choose" to move, the structural conditions that frame issues of consent are complex, and distinctions are often impossible to sustain on the ground. Hence, it is important to keep in mind that although Kwoto's directors identify as "displaced" they represent a different socio-economic position due to their background and their education level than many of the displaced audiences for their plays and many of the performers in their troupe as well. Too, as Loveless notes, we cannot automatically rank the conditions of the official "camps" versus the unofficial

"shantytowns." They are indistinguishable in many respects, but international aid organizations cater to the camps, which therefore have services, but due to their isolation from the urban center, worse conditions and access to employment (18).

Kwoto developed its mission in light of this massive displacement, the social restructuring resulting from the expansion of a capitalist market economy, war violence and militarization, Christian missionization, and the policies of Islamization promulgated by the NIF (National Islamic Front) government installed after a 1989 coup. Furthermore, Amir Idris identifies Sudan's dual historical legacies as the racialized state in the North and the ethnicization of the South ("Comments" 3). These dual legacies form the hegemonic context within which Kwoto operates. In light of this context and their stated aims, Kwoto targets the southern Sudanese (displaced, diasporic as well as those remaining in the South) as their primary interlocuters and beneficiaries, but self-consciously addresses other audiences as well, including all Sudanese, Arabic-speaking audiences, African artists and citizens from other African nations, donor organizations, NGOs, and westerners. Interviews with the directors, observations of their performances and review of their promotional materials generate a picture of a group that energetically domesticates the styles, techniques and content of various cultures, appropriates the language of humanism as an antidote to militarized identities of Sudan's civil wars, and aspires to speak to a "world humanity" ("Kwoto's Portfolio" 2 – 4).

Kwoto's self-definition as a "southern" theater troupe must be understood in light of historical and political developments in Sudan, and is not strictly a geographic entity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the "North"/ "South" division has precolonial

origins, but was deepened and consolidated during the Ottoman, and later the British empires. The contemporary south, like the rest of Sudan, is the product of the diplomatic and violent negotiations among competing and layered imperialisms. At its most literal, the modern "South" is a geographic entity, and refers to three geographic provinces, Bahr al-Ghazal, Upper Nile, and Equatoria, whose respective capitals are Wau, Malakal and Juba (Albino 1). These areas were first governed as provinces during the Ottoman era (1850s), but the provincial boundaries were strengthened during the Anglo-Egyptian era, and became further solidified as a result of the assigning of different missionary groups (Roman Catholics, American Presbyterians and Church Missionary Society [C.M.S.]) to respective "spheres of influence" throughout the South (Albino 17 – 18; Said *The Sudan* 166; Wheeler "Sudan's" 13). In the immediate post-independence period, the guerilla movement led by the Anyanya, dominated by Equatorian groups, agitated for a federal system characterized by a self-governing southern region, with Juba as the regional capital, a request that was honored under the Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act of the Addis Ababa agreement ending the first civil war in 1972. General Nimeiri's decision to re-divide the south into three distinct regions with their own legislature was justified on the basis of its ability to make government more accountable to local people, but ended up contributing to the ignition of the second civil war (1983 – 2004). Although some manner of decentralization was supported by many Equatorian intellectuals in their bid to manage and undermine what they perceived as domination and monopolization of government posts by the largest single ethnic group, the Dinka, Nimeiri's decision was later interpreted within the context of a longer history

of manipulation of inter-ethnic relations in the south by the central government in Khartoum (El Haj Ali 232 – 233). Debates about whether and how the "south" should unify as one region have been fierce, and the provinces have continued to take on new politicized meanings in the post-independence years, meanings that have built on the previous meanings and have intermittently contributed to the inter-regional and inter- and intra-ethnic conflict in the south (Albino 9 – 76; Johnson "The South" 2). The topic of the three provinces and the provincial boundaries dividing the south inform many of Kwoto's improvisations, including *Gidadat,* about three women imprisoned in a Kober prison, and *Haj Yousif,* treating southern migration to the north and analyzed later in this chapter.

The peoples who have occupied the south and are today considered "southern" peoples include three main groups: the Nilotic peoples such as the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Anyuak, and Luo; the Nilo-Hamitic peoples such as the Bari, Lotuko, Lokoya, Mundari, Kuku, Kakwa, Pojulu and Nyangwara, and the Sudanic peoples such as the Kreish, Moru, Madi and Azande. According to Johnson, the divisions among the three provinces become meaningful when we understand that most of pastoralists and Western Nilotic peoples live in Bahr al-Ghazal and Upper Nile, while the majority of the agriculturalists live in Equatoria ("The South" 2). Kwoto's members have been drawn from all of these groups of the South, and Kwoto's repertoire is also reflective of this diversity (see Appendices). However, the concept of "southern" employed by Kwoto members also includes peoples such as the Nuba, who are geographically located in the province of Kordofan, considered part of the north. Thus, Kwoto invokes the political and ideological

sense of "South" employed by such diverse agents as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in their twenty-two year struggle against the Sudanese state, and commentators such Oliver Albino, who in his book *The Sudan: a southern viewpoint* (1970) writes, "Here I wish to state that I am arguing for a Southern State that will include the Nuba, the Fur, and possibly the Ingesena, who are an inalienable part of the Southern Sudan" (111). Briefly, due to the historical mode of integration and the centralization of the state in the North, the "South" has become synonymous with the peripheral subjects of Sudan as well as those who identify as "African" in opposition to the hegemonic Arab Islamic identity.

In my readings of Kwoto's plays, I find that the preoccupation with kinship is also a preoccupation with changing notions of what it means to be "southern." This is also tied to changing sources of authority - and especially male authority - emblematized by the attenuated family structure as southerners adapt to a new urban environment. Anne McClintock poses what she calls a crucial question for progressive nationalism, and I would add for postcolonial studies: "Can the iconography of the family be retained as the figure for national unity, or must an alternative, radical iconography be developed?" ("No Longer" 110). Scholars of Sudanese political systems have noted the interpenetration of the family and the state in both northern and southern communities. Francis Deng, for example, notes that the Paramount Chief among the pastoralist Dinka is considered the "father uniting the living members of his community among themselves and with their dead" (*The Dinka* 112); other scholars have noted that among agricultural communities, the control of wealth and productive exploitation of resources rest with a council of male

elders, and such highly respected and venerated stations as the "rain-maker" among the Bari, for instance, are hereditary (Seligman 248). As scholars of kinship in Sudan such as Richard Lobban have suggested, urban migration has multiple and contradictory effects on kinship structures and social stratification; old orders may break down, traditional hierarchies may be strengthened, and new classes may come into existence ("Class and Kinship" 51, 53). Many of Kwoto's plays portray the emergence of a new class – even the "transcendence of kin by class" (Lobban "Class and Kinship" 51), although this new state of affairs is treated ambivalently. In my readings, I highlight the preponderance of disconnected, and in effect "kinless" male characters, and examine how these characters serve as caveats for the audience but also symbols of a future social order. By taking "displacement as a subject for drama," which is the title of an essay by one of Kwoto's founders, Al Samani Lual Aro, Kwoto stages multiple and contradictory versions of the displaced southerner in the urban north – as a naïve rural self lost in an impersonal city, as an assimilated and corrupt criminal, street child, or agent of the law, as ethical witnesses to death and destruction, as a new, model citizen and as a figure potentially leading the way to a unified future and to the proper execution of the slogan "unity in diversity" for so long promised to the Sudanese people by their leaders (Voll).

The dances that Kwoto performs are crucial to the communication of a message of unity, since the scenes staged in the plays are often about social fracturing, isolated and atomized individuals, and the disappointment or ungrounded violence of the emasculated man. That is, the dances and the plays serve as counterpoints to one another, with the plays dealing directly with ethnic division, the penetration of market values in

the community and the resulting conflicts and competition, and the dances functioning as a salve to heal past and current wounds and celebrate the vitality of a unified community. Kwoto's performances of "traditional" dances and plays rely on a self-conscious mixture of signifiers from diverse origins, and the overturning of traditional rules that circumscribe participation, so that everyone may dance. When performed for displaced and southern audiences, these hybrid performances of dance and theater reject the recent "ethnicization" or "retribalization" of southern identities and offer instead a picture of a "pan-southern" identity, rather than a particular ethnic loyalty, as one solution to the problems of division and "forced" and primordial identities (Appadurai "Dead" 905 – 925; Deng *War* 225; Idris "Comments"). In response to both spoken and unspoken anxieties of cultural loss and assimilation, Kwoto's performances offer the "materialities" of ethnicity (dress, material culture, song, dance, language), but suggest that these may be re-invented, exchanged and freely adopted. As of 2002, Kwoto was increasingly staging performances of dances in commercial venues such as the Hotel Meridien and abroad; these performances for cultural outsiders, which may be motivated for multiple reasons, seem to enact the processes of commodification that are at issue in the plays, and draw attention to different attempts at establishing affiliations and recovering "community" in a rapidly developing urban marketplace.

While the first chapter dealt with a now canonized novel, this chapter turns to cultural products about the subaltern, produced by those who occupy intermediate and in-between social positions. Considerations of the cultural production of peripheral classes and their contributions to and critiques of nation-building can only enhance our

understanding of the construction of public memory and identity formation in postcolonial contexts. In fact, the internationalized and globalized texture of our world may come into focus even more clearly in so-called peripheral arenas:

> It may be convenient to think that globalism most powerfully affects the cosmopolitan centers of the world. But perhaps, as Ngugi implies in *Moving the Centre* (1993) Mozambique and Angola, Africa and Asia, are the sites where new configurations of power shaping the world are most visible. For it is here that flexibility, the breakdown of entrenched institutionalization, the politics of survival, and the creativity of development meet in the most direct of ways. (Nordstrom "Out of the Shadows" 239)

Methodology

This chapter draws on material gathered during a correspondence with the directors of the Kwoto Cultural Center and a 3-month residence in Khartoum, Sudan from May – August 2002. The primary materials at my disposal include original, unpublished playscripts written in colloquial Sudanese and Juba Arabic, and English, official documents about the group written in English and Arabic by the Managing and Artistic Directors, email correspondence, and video and audiotape of multiple performances and lectures. The directors provided me with the scripts, some of which were skeletal, for five plays: *Geragir* (Mudfish), *Al-Hoosh* (The Courtyard), *Marhoum Alif* (The Deceased X), *Qadayah Zhol al-Himar* (The Donkey's Shadow), and *Warnish* (Shoe Shiners), and videotapes for multiple dances and the performances of *Marhoum Alif* and excerpts from *Qadayah.* While I was in Sudan, I witnessed the performances that were in current circulation, including *Haj Youssef, Al-Hoosh* and *Warnish,* which I videotaped. As in the first chapter, I pursue a materialist analysis grounded in historical inquiry, privileging close textual readings of the play texts, but embedding them within

dense social and historical contexts. For information on and insight into the social and historical context of war and displacement that frames the work of Kwoto in Sudan, I draw from a varied body of scholarship produced by historians and anthropologists, as well as other forms of documentation produced by non-governmental organizations, human rights organizations and faith-based organizations. Furthermore, in order to contextualize Kwoto's artistic contributions within a history and contemporary context of performance traditions in both northern and southern Sudan, I draw from the work of theater scholars and historians as well as newspaper articles from Khartoum. Importantly, I also draw on oral interviews with Kwoto's directors in order to fill in the gaps in the historical record.[6]

This chapter differs from the first chapter in that the sphere of contemporary performance and popular culture called for an interdisciplinary approach. Although the bulk of my interpretations are based on historical research and textual and materialist analysis, I augment my readings with observations gleaned from performative analysis and information provided by my interlocuters in Sudan. During the entirety of my stay, I benefited from speaking informally with the directors and members on a daily basis (in Modern Standard Arabic, Sudanese Colloquial and English) about their activities with Kwoto, their interpretations of plays and their experiences performing around Sudan. I documented some of the performances in photos and slides, and I have thirty-two ninety-minute video-tapes of rehearsals, performances, and interviews. Additionally, I conducted five planned, formal ninety minute individual interviews with three of the directors, all men: two with the Managing Director, two with the Artistic Director, and

one with the Media Director in charge of Video and Communications. These interviews were video and/or audio-taped and conducted in a combination of Modern Standard Arabic, Sudanese colloquial and English. The Managing Director and I established our relationship in English over email, and two of the directors were fluent in English due to their primary education in mission schools in the south, so we switched between English and Arabic throughout the interviews. Questions focused on the historical development of southern theater, the origins of and inspiration for Kwoto, organizational practices, and interpretations of and historical contexts for plays. I selected six long-term members of Kwoto (4 men and 2 women) and conducted video-taped interviews with them in Sudanese colloquial with the assistance of Edward Ladu Terso, a journalist for the *Khartoum Monitor,* who mediated between Modern Standard Arabic and Sudanese colloquial where necessary.[7] Questions focused on theater background, reasons for joining Kwoto, the role of Kwoto in the interviewee's life and the larger community, and interpretations of dances and plays. I also spoke informally with several southern Sudanese young adults who I met through a contact at the newspaper *Al Ayyam* and I took notes during these conversations. These individuals knew about Kwoto or attended Kwoto shows and shared diverse opinions on Kwoto's project and performances. Although both space and focus prevent me from including all of the actual interviews in the present dissertation, they do inform the interpretations and I hope they provide a basis for future research and publications. I also attended several meetings between Kwoto directors and members of international NGOs and these meetings were held in English.

At the time of my visit, the troupe maintained the Center in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, which is also recognized as part of a larger entity called "Greater Khartoum" – also known as the "Three Towns" – Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman (El Sammani et al. 247 – 321). Upon my arrival in Khartoum, I rented a small apartment attached to a secondary school (Unity School), an apartment usually occupied by expatriate teachers, but vacant due to the summer vacation. This apartment was located only a few blocks from Kwoto's headquarters to which I walked every morning. Due to the irregularity of street notations in Khartoum, Kwoto did not have a street address, but at the time of my visit in 2002, Kwoto occupied offices in a central locale in Khartoum East, and according to their promotional materials, their address was as follows: "West of Al Mac Nimir Pharmacy, Al Mac Nimir Street. Khartoum East, SQ (4) Plot (1)" ("Kwoto Portfolio" 2). I spent time at the Center everyday during my stay, often sharing coffee in the mornings purchased from the *sitt as-shai* (tea lady; tea seller) who sat on the sidewalk outside Kwoto's office, and some meals with members in the afternoons. Meals consisted of typical Khartoum fare such as bowls of *ful masri* (fava beans, eaten with bread, feta cheese and red onions) and *tamia* (falafel on bread), which the directors bought from street vendors, and stews made with potatoes, okra, and meat, which were prepared by Maria Gabrielle who occupied the position of cook. These collective meals, which were at times ad hoc affairs and at other times planned, were shared around a rectangular wooden table, and were important to the overall socialization of group members. The conversation and sharing that took place at these times were also important to my learning about the organization and values of the troupe. I was told

more than once that eating collectively made one part of the community, and the young performers always urged me to eat the last bits of meat, a gesture to my special position as honored guest on the premises. The office was divided into approximately eight rooms, apportioned as follows: an office for the Artistic Director, an office for the Finance Officers, an office for the Managing Director, an Office for the Student Affairs Coordinator, a Computer office, a Library, a storage room for costumes and props, and a very small room with basic amenities to prepare tea, coffee and meals. There was a large courtyard in the center where Kwoto held periodic events (such as lectures), and members ate lunch, washed clothes, hung laundry, and congregated informally. The Guard, Uncle Louis, sometimes slept in the courtyard and kept watch over the premises at night.

Rehearsals were conducted at least three days a week in the courtyard of St. Matthew's, a Roman Catholic Church established in 1875 on Nile Avenue on the banks of the Nile within walking distance from Kwoto's office. The directors took responsibility for the facilitation of the rehearsals; generally, Stephen conducted physical fitness, dance and music (drumming) exercises, Derik ran drama and improvisation exercises and Atem held video classes and film discussions. During my visit, the directors were experimenting with a system of "rotating leadership" wherein one director would be in charge of the performances and play rehearsals for a set period before rotating to a new director. The directors were keen to have me participate in all of the rehearsals, and when I was not pursuing other research activities, I did join the group in

the Church courtyard and took part in the warm-up exercises, the dance exercises and some of the improvisation exercises.

Oral sources, ranging from formal and informal interviews, to transitory performances, to the retellings of tales, have been recognized as important to the circulation and production of history in South Sudan by many scholars. Anthropologists and historians such as Stephanie Beswick, Jok Madut Jok, Sharon Hutchinson, Wendy James, Douglas Johnson, and Ahmed Sikainga, have drawn extensively on interviews in their studies of, respectively, the precolonial history of the Dinka, modern Dinka, transformations in Nuer life in the 1980s and 90s, the effect of war on the Uduk people, the history of Nuer prophecy and southern diaspora. As these scholars and others know, many southern Sudanese communities are primarily oral cultures that transmit important knowledge via stories and rituals. Just as significant, however, is the recognition of the ways a bookless economy has been structurally imposed upon many southern Sudanese. In her chapter "The 'Book Famine' in Postcolonial West Africa," literary scholar Stephanie Newell rightfully challenges the indiscriminate use of the phrase "book famine" to describe the conditions of publishing in West Africa. She argues that critics' own bias and expectations lead them to downplay local reading habits and ignore the vibrant informal sector of the book market in West African nations such as Ghana and Nigeria characterized by pamphlets and small print-runs (88 – 90). Newell's remarks are extremely helpful in casting new light on African literary studies in West Africa. When applied to Sudan, her insights are useful for recognizing certain understudied publishing trends in South Sudan during the years of peace (1972 – 1983).[8] However, the different

colonial history in Sudan together with the continuing war, have effected a clearer case of "book famine." First of all, British officials deliberately halted development and education in the South, preferring to "preserv[e] the pristine structure of tribal life" (Albino 97). Moreover, the current war has eroded the educational developments gained in the 1970s. In the preface to his book on war in Sudan, Jok Madut Jok writes, "As it is with all literate South Sudanese cut off by war from any sources of reading material, the people of Bahr al-Ghazal were overjoyed when I brought these materials [magazines reporting on slavery]. They also lamented that although these works were the foundation of a history of modern South Sudan, the seventeen years of war had deprived several generations of South Sudanese of education so that no one will write that history and most South Sudanese will not comprehend what outsiders write about them" (xi).

Another complication is raised when we consider the comparative lack of attention paid to southerners who have migrated and live in the north of Sudan. Ahmad Sikainga has observed about the contemporary displaced persons, "While the fate of these victims and their living conditions have become a major concern for humanitarian groups and aid organizations, their position in northern Sudanese society and the demographic and social consequences of this massive population movement have not been examined" ("Military" 23). In preliminary work on popular culture amongst ex-slaves in colonial Khartoum, Sikainga again observed that the subject of popular culture among peripheral subjects has "received little attention in popular and scholarly writings" (*Slaves* 164). Salah El-Din El Shazali Ibrahim affirmed this viewpoint when he observed that "very little attention has been accorded to displacement as a social process that

transforms existence, and its sociocultural dimension has also been grossly overlooked" ("War Displacement" 35).

With these caveats in mind, it is clear that a literary scholar studying contemporary cultural production by southerners in the north must gather and utilize an array of sources. Fortunately, scholarship in the area of cultural production by southerners and other peripheral groups of Sudan seems to be burgeoning in recent years. As already noted, Sikainga has been among the first to examine earlier southern Sudanese diasporas to the North and these migrants' contributions to Sudanese popular culture. This work has resulted in a few brief but compelling articles so far, and he is now at work on a longer book-length study of popular culture in Sudan and its connections with slavery and slave descent. In 2000, the anthropologist G.P. Makris published a detailed account of *tumbura,* a type of possession ritual undertaken mostly by descendents of slaves in the Greater Khartoum area. Saadia I. Malik has completed both a Master's thesis on the literary production (poems and songs) of displaced women entitled *Displaced Women Speak* (1995) and a dissertation entitled *Exploring Aghani Al-Banat: A Postcolonial Ethnographic Approach to Sudanese Women's Songs, Culture and Performance* (2003), which includes some attention to the role of ex-slave descendents in creating the art of women's songs in the Greater Khartoum area.

The present chapter differs from Sikainga's, Makris' and Malik's contributions in that it is focused not on ex-slaves or slave descendents but on contemporary southern migrants in Khartoum who have a different set of identifications with the past and with the historical legacy of slavery resulting in the population of ex-slave descendants in the north. They are also engaged in a different set of performance traditions although it may

be true that, like prior migrants, they use these performance traditions as strategies of urban adaptation and negotiation with new identities. Earlier southern diasporas were conditioned by slavery and forced military conscription, which facilitated a process of Arabization and Islamization, and general assimilation into northern customs, mores and practices. But, assimilation of this subordinate population remained partial, with slave descendants occupying an ambiguous "contact zone" with fluid and situational identities (Makris *Changing* 8; Sikainga *Slaves* xv). Some southern migrants retained aspects of their home cultures for several decades, some settling in colonies for discharged soldiers or other enclaves, eventually developing hybrid performance traditions in the areas of music, dance and ritual that combined aspects of "northern" and "southern" genres and aesthetics (Sikainga *Slaves* 163 – 164).

Contemporary southern migration has been prompted by multiple and intersecting wars, environmental disaster and economic ruin; some of these triggers and circumstances echo earlier histories of migration, but contemporary geo-political, economic and religious contexts have more often than not led to the rigid maintenance of boundaries between "northerners" and "southerners." An earlier generation of assimilated southern migrants to the north negotiated a "hidden" and stigmatized southern identity that was spoken about discreetly and asserted only during the liminal space of performance (Makris *Changing* 41). Some of these ex-slaves eventually labored to align themselves with the prevailing Arab Islamic hegemonic identity and referenced the "south" as an identity or geography only obliquely. Others developed performance traditions that expressed their unique position as recently freed slaves within a changing

landscape of wage labor and class consciousness in the 1920s and 30s in the urban center of Khartoum. After World War II, new forms of popular culture thrived in working-class neighborhoods home also to ex-slave communities; these communities continually introduced new styles of dress, music and sport, but were often denigrated as "servile" and deviant by Arabized northerners (Sikainga *Slaves* 166). The contemporary southern migrants who perform with Kwoto identify primarily as "southerners" and make this central to their public and performative identities. They, like their predecessors, are responding to social and economic processes that are continuing to integrate Sudan into the world-system. In response to historical and contemporary conditions, members of Kwoto assert their "southernness," appropriating elements from the peoples and places of the south as well as past generations of southerners in the north, and redefine the identity for a new period in Sudan's history.

Theater scholar Khalid Al-Mubarak Mustafa writes that "both the African and Arab-Islamic features of Sudanese heritage have left their mark on Sudanese drama" ("Sudan" 2004 77). Kwoto's theater incorporates the language Juba Arabic, southern performance traditions and dances and themes pertinent to southerners living in the north. In a July 2002 lecture given to a student audience at Africa College in Khartoum, Kwoto's managing director Derik Uya Alfred argued that the "preservation" of culture should not be viewed as separate from the process of what he called "intercultural fertilization" (Terso "A Cultural Day: Part One"). He argued that the preservation of cultures should not entail the purification of cultures, or the erasure of the process of hybridization. He warned against what he identified as the prevailing notion among

southerners that "culture is static" and the province of a particular group, and instead explained the importance of recognizing the dynamism of any cultural tradition, adding "there is no such thing as a pure culture" (Terso "A Cultural Day: Part One"). Kwoto's theater reflects this process of hybridization and is an amalgamation of indigenous performance forms, Arabic language, and Western theater styles and techniques, including absurdist drama, theater-for-development, theatre of the oppressed, and school and Church-sponsored radio and stage dramas produced by educated southerners during the 1970s. Kwoto's mixing of traditional and modern forms in such a way as to disregard "origins" and boundaries between genres and between cultures is one of the defining features of the troupe, and is a strategy that distinguishes the troupe from other contemporary southern performance groups in Sudan today that remain within the scope of one ethnic tradition.[9] In his path-breaking book, *The Black Atlantic,* Paul Gilroy sets out a model to analyze the complex, entangled genealogies of performance practices that emerge in a diasporic frame (1993) and theorists of West African theater have usefully extended his theories to account for practices on the continent (Cole 21 – 38); the "promiscuous" (Gilroy 15 – 16) theatrical inheritance that Kwoto displays accords with Gilroy's deconstruction of clear lines of origin, and introduces elements from the nexus of Arabo-African cultures.

An adequate appreciation for Kwoto's drama requires a basic understanding of Kwoto's multiple antecedents; therefore, in the next section I offer an historical overview of performance traditions in Sudan, especially as they relate to the history of southern Sudanese performance, hybrid traditions, and the contemporary situation in Khartoum,

since these are relevant to Kwoto. David Kerr makes the compelling argument for the link between the shape of traditional theatrical forms and particular modes of production, and we can see this relationship in the forms introduced below. One overriding theme that emerges is the role of performance traditions in achieving social stability and solidarity and negotiating hegemonic values and structures, including those shaping gender ideals. Equally important, however, is the way the frame of a performance may open a liminal space for the voicing of criticism and taboo subjects. I introduce these performance traditions chronologically and with clear divisions, keeping in mind, however, Gilroy's reminder of the messiness of routes of cultural transmission and the constant dynamism and borrowing that occurs across temporal, geographic and cultural divides.

Performance Traditions

Indigenous Traditions: Southern traditions

As I have already noted, the "South" is not a monolithic entity, and this equally applies to its cultural output. With a population estimated at six million, with fifty different languages and dialects, and a territory of approximately a quarter of a million square miles, the south is vast and heterogeneous (Johnson "The South" 1). Kwoto recognized the difficulty in creating a "southern" theater troupe when "this South is in itself many Souths" ("Kwoto Portfolio" 6), and at first focused on six languages: Dinka, Shilluk, Bari, Nuer, Latoka, Azande and Arabi Juba (pidgin Arabic), later increasing to twenty ("Kwoto Portfolio" 8). It is clearly difficult, if not impossible, to make generalizations about performance forms across ethnic groups; it is equally impossible to

include information about every type of performance from among the incredible variety of documented forms among the peoples of southern Sudan. Therefore, this section offers a necessarily selective overview of precolonial indigenous performance traditions from among the pastoralist and agriculturalist, decentralized and state-based societies of the south. According to theater scholar John Conteh-Morgan, "Two broad categories of indigenous performance can be distinguished: recreational and devotional" ("Francophone Africa" 88), and other scholars have noted the social function of precolonial African drama (Adedeji 88; Etherton 314). Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes of precolonial drama:

> It was part and parcel of the rhythm of daily and seasonal life of the community. It was an activity among other activities, often drawing its energy from those other activities. It was also entertainment in the sense of involved enjoyment; it was moral instruction; and it was also a strict matter of life and death and communal survival. (*Decolonising* 37)

Ngugi's description as well as Victor Turner's discussion of ritual as a response to a breach, a shift in a person's status, or a crisis, that moves people into a liminal realm, is applicable to the southern performance forms that follow. Organized around initiation, seasonal cycles, religious rituals, communion with ancestors, and inauguration of political and spiritual leaders, the performance traditions facilitate the integration of the community and work in tandem with kinship structures, even as they may allow for the temporary inversion of roles, or internal critique (*From Ritual* 20 – 60).

Among the south's peoples, the Nilotic-speaking pastoralists such as the Dinka and Nuer, are the most numerous and among the best-documented in academic literature.[10] There are also much smaller pastoralist cattle-keeping groups such as the

DiDinga and the Toposa in the far south on the borders of Kenya, who share certain performance genres such as the ox song. As I will discuss later, the pastoralist tradition has been an important symbol of pre-Islamic, precolonial culture for Kwoto; the directors have not only incorporated many pastoralist songs and dances, they have also chosen the term "Kwoto," a Toposa term according to publicity materials, as the name of the troupe ("Kwoto's History").

Deng suggests that songs and dances are relevant to every sector of traditional Dinka society, including the economy and the legal process. Material culture in these groups has historically been minimal; songs, dances, ceremonial rituals, and folktales traditionally served as a repository of the groups' hegemonic ideals and values, including unity, harmony and the construction of gender ideals.[11] Keeping in mind the self-identification of the Dinka as *Monyjang,* or "The Man [or the husband] of Men," (Deng *Dinka of Sudan* 2) we can better understand the role of the songs in sustaining a system stratified by gender and age.

The Dinka and Nuer, like other pastoralist groups, are both decentralized and stateless, thus, the age-set system plays an important role in organizing and stratifying the society, and songs and dances gain impetus and meaning from the age-set and the activities associated with it (initiation and warfare rituals in particular, but also courtship) (78). Among the Dinka and Nuer, male youths are bound together more tightly through the initiation rituals they undergo together, including facial scarification, months of seclusion and training in war dances. Indeed, the control and diversion of young men's vitality and potential violence is a major function of Dinka song and dance rituals.

Significantly, Deng mentions that it is young and middle-aged men and women who participate most often and most vigorously in singing groups, implying that the participation in songs and dances serve a compensatory function for those excluded from the formal political process (*The Dinka and their Songs* 81). Most often, men dance with their associated age-set, and Deng goes so far as to suggest that the immersion in song and dance by younger men may serve those in power and assist in maintaining the status quo. He writes: "Songs [and] such associated skills as dance [may] interact to give Dinka youth aesthetic pleasure and self-gratification, which minimize competition with their elders over power and wealth" (82). Thus, the structure of the performance event, like the structure of kinship, confirms the status quo (Turner *From Ritual* 41).

Dinka performance traditions allow for the glorification of selfhood and lineage, the exaltation of the society as against its enemies, the confirmation of connection to others, including the spirits, and the inculcation of values to the young (*Dinka and their Songs* 89). Furthermore, the performance traditions offer a protected sphere for the airing of complaints and criticism of authorities ("a peaceful outlet for dissatisfaction" (82)), the expression of shame, or the discussion of otherwise taboo subjects (81 – 89). Most significantly, according to Deng, songs uphold the social ideals of unity and harmony, even or most especially when they serve as vehicles of critique. Among songs such as the male ox song and the age-set insult song, there is a tension between the harmony and unity of the group and the "personal distinctiveness" of the individual. (Deng 88; Holtzman 7).[12] With the loosening of traditional kinship structures, attenuated significance of cattle wealth, and the perceived self-assertion of women, there emerged

an adapted use of the insult song among Nuer men in the 1990s. With the introduction of cash, store-bought goods and new definitions of style, the notion of the desirable man changed in Nuerland. Feeling the pressure to attain new ideals of manhood, Nuer men became more aggressive with women who rejected their overtures, and Nuer elders noticed this aggression expressing itself as an upsurge in "vicious" insult songs composed by young men about their female counterparts (Hutchinson The Nuer 160; 209 – 217).

Besides the pastoralist performance traditions, Kwoto has incorporated songs and rituals from both the Shilluk and the Azande. Unlike the decentralized Dinka and Nuer, the Shilluk and the Azande have a centralized state, a hierarchy of leadership and an established line of succession, and not surprisingly, the ritual forms for which they are known serve to consolidate the royal line. The Shilluk's Reth (king) held the position of head of state with both temporal and spiritual authority, and a highly developed ritual is enacted each time a new king is to be installed, a ritual that has inspired modern playwrights in Sudan and been incorporated into the repertoire of the national folklore troupe (*Firqat Al-Funun Al-Shabiyya,* National Folk Dance Troupe) established in 1966 (Albino 3; Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 1998 231). The Reth (king) investiture involves the entire Shilluk community, and involves a ritualized ceremony full of music and dance in which the community confers legitimacy onto the new king after subjecting him to criticism. Al-Mubarak Mustafa highlights the Shilluk ritual in his two of his overviews of Sudanese theater ("Sudan" 1998 231; "Sudan" 2004 78) and describes the ritual in more detail:

> When the Reth dies his spirit is preserved in a sacred effigy. In order to pass on the spirit to the Reth-elect (who is chosen from a number of noble families)

> priests take the effigy out and engage the army of the Reth-elect in several mock battles until the effigy is victorious. The 'captured' Reth-elect then sits on a stool immediately after the effigy is removed from it. He enters a trance as the spirit is transferred into his body. The effigy is then taken back to its shrine and kept for the next investiture. The ceremony ends with a democratic open gathering, in which all members of the Shilluk group have a chance to criticize, advise, blame or praise the new Reth before he assumes full power ("Sudan" 2004 78).

The Shilluk king is an embodiment of the Shilluk's potency as a people; to avoid the descent of the king into imminent illness, senility or death, a royal son could legitimately kill the Reth during the night and reign in his stead (Seligman 90). Notably, possession by Nyikang, the first Shilluk king, as well as more recent kings, is a feature of later Shilluk performance traditions, which may have been an adaptation as Shilluk moved north and to urban areas (Seligman 87). As one northern Sudanese playwright inspired by the Shilluk ritual, Al-Mubarak Mustafa developed a modern play entitled *Al Reth* (*The Reth)* written and performed in 1978. Although *The Reth* was staged and televised (unlike other of Mustafa's plays which were censored), Mustafa writes that many of the more politicized Islamists in the country "savaged" the play, "deplored" the fact that it involved young Muslim participation, and warned that the play's "elevation to academic respectability" of a pagan practice would have dire consequences for Muslims in Sudan ("From" 5).

Much more recently, southerners have become agents of their own discursive representations of such ceremonial figures as the Shilluk Reth. For example, contemporary pop singer Viviana James, a Shilluk woman, released an album in 2002 entitled *Fashoda: Songs from South Sudan,* which includes the song Nyikang, a modern interpretation of the traditional Shilluk song praising the first Shilluk king (see Seligman

44). The tape's jacket and the music itself displays a hybridization of cultures: James is depicted in front of tropical scenery wearing traditional Shilluk beading; the song titles refer to famous Shilluk figures; the melodies include reggae rhythms and beats as well as traditional choral arrangements; yet it is interesting to note that the tape was produced in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and that the jacket includes a mixture of English and Arabic (see Figure 2). In a 2002 lecture, Kwoto's Managing Director Derik Uya Alfred said of Viviana James' reggae rendition of Shilluk tunes, "The traditional music contained in the "Fashoda Album" produced by Bibiana [sic] is old. But she included new elements in it like keyboard, guitar, new melodies. These new elements are borrowed" (Terso "A Cultural Day" 5). Kwoto also includes a version of Nyikang as a staple of their repertoire, and when I observed performances in 2002, James Ewaj, a Shilluk member, was the lead singer (Appendix A and C).

As noted above, one major division among southerners exists along the pastoralist/agriculturalist axis, and this axis informs Kwoto's composition and repertoire as they work to include traditions and persons from all groups. Some Nilo-Hamitic groups who occupied the Equatorian province such as the Bari, Lotuko, Lokoya, Mundari, Kuku, Kakwa, Pojulu and Nyangwara keep cattle along with cultivating the land, but differentiate themselves from the pastoralist Dinka and Nuer through their role as cultivators (Albino 3).[13] Equatorian groups likewise use performance traditions to generate unity and instill hegemonic values among their members. Rather than a head of state, like the Shilluk, these groups are run by councils of elders who are responsible for maintaining order. Among these groups, the hereditary rain-maker is a prominent and

powerful member of the community, around whom various rituals occur (Albino 3; Seligman 23).

Indeed, the rain-maker and medicine-man, in some traditional societies one and the same, is a significant figure in southern performance traditions, a fact that has informed modern appropriations and renditions of southern traditions in modern Khartoum, including Kwoto's performances. Al-Mubarak Mustafa includes the figure and ceremonies of the *Kujur* in his overview of Sudanese theater history. About the kujur, he writes: "a combination of rain-maker and medicine-man, [the kujur] goes through a series of very theatrical rituals dancing in full regalia. Kujurs are very popular and influential in non-Muslim areas of Sudan" ("Sudan" 1998 231), but Davidson notes that more recent waves of Islamization have led to the erasure of the tradition of the kujur in some Nuba areas where villagers were "embarrassed" to discuss beliefs considered non-Islamic and elders reported that the "last kujur died in 1966" (181). On the other hand, Davidson observes the continuing relevance of indigenous religion among another contemporary Nuba community who consult the "providential wisdom of the kujur and rainpriest" in agricultural decisions (265). Some Kwoto members mentioned the kujur as a feature of everyday existence, and Kwoto's repertoire included two dances associated with the figure; besides the Kambala dance, Kwoto stages a dance of the "medicine-man" whom they refer to as "kujur" (see Figures 3 – 6). The "kujur" also makes an appearance in the play *Marhoum Alif* (*The Deceased X*), analyzed later in this chapter.

Like many indigenous spiritual figures, the kujur controls access to the spiritual world, and is thought to mediate spirits, which also gives him access to power in the

secular world. As a central figure in the community, the kujur both affirms communal unity and justifies social differentiation. Associated primarily with the Nuba people of the Nuba mountains, the kujur is responsible for initiating a dance called Kambala, which is also part of Kwoto's repertoire (Hamad "The Kujur" 9) (Appendix C and Figures 3 and 4).[14] In a lengthy article entitled "The Kujur of the Nuba" published in the *Khartoum Monitor* in August 2002, Alrayh Musa Hamad describes Kambala as "by far the most famous Nuba dance," states that the dance "symbolizes courage, strength and love" and notes that it is one of the few indigenous Nuba dances still performed today (9). Like the ox song/dance and other initiation songs of the Dinka, the Kambala is intricately connected to male initiation rituals, is principally a ceremony to mark the induction of an age-set into manhood and is associated with boys' maturity and adolescence (Rahhal 3). During the course of the dance, young men tie horns of the cow on their heads and rattles around their waists. The men engage in movements that resemble a bull, hitting the ground with one leg while holding up the other" (Hamad 9) (Figures 3 and 4).

Significantly, reviewed historically, the figure of the "Kujur" illustrates the complicated status of "tradition" in the postcolonial period. According to Douglas Johnson, the colloquial Arabic *kujur* is a "pejorative term administrators applied indiscriminately to priests, prophets, and magicians" (*Nuer Prophets* 6). That is, although "kujur" may have once identified a particular type of spiritual guide, both colonial officials and some northern Sudanese Muslims contributed to the indiscriminate application of the term to a wide range of diverse religious figures, including prophets and other spiritual guides in pastoralist communities in southern Sudan, including the

Dinka and Nuer. Johnson traces the first use of kujur among administrators to the 1874 appearance of 'Cogyoor' to ridicule Dinka religious leaders in G. Schweinfurth's book *Heart of Africa,* which Johnson says was widely read by British colonial officials in Sudan (24). The decentralization of Dinka and Nuer societies made the implementation of indirect rule difficult for the British, and they searched in vain for "chiefs" with whom they might cooperate. Instead, they found prophets and other spiritual leaders, and became concerned that these prophets had not only usurped legitimate authority from "chiefs" but would incite rebellion against the colonial government. Fearful of any sign of prophetic, millennial, or ecstatic religious expression after their encounter with and defeat by the Mahdi in 1885, the British were quick to target anyone in the south that appeared as a "spiritual" leader, and would name him "kujur" (24). Seligman (1932) notes that the diminution of the power of the "kujur" (kojur) in the public sphere was a direct result of the imposition of colonial law (31). It was only after Evans-Pritchard was employed to produce longer researches on the Nuer that the term "kujur" was retired and replaced with more precise terminology (30).

After independence and Sudanization of the administration, Northern Sudanese officials again employed the Arabic term kujur to describe Nuer spiritual authorities (Johnson *Nuer Prophets* 290). Other communities use the term as well. In his 2000 book, Makris defines kujur as "a Nuba shamanistic spirit cult" and refers to "kampala" as a "Nuba ceremonial dance performed by Nuba migrants on the outskirts of Omdurman" (*Changing* 56). Notably, Al-Mubarak Mustafa cites the important development of the incorporation of one "kujur dance" into the National Folk Dance Troupe's repertoire

("Sudan" 1998 231). This diffusion of the meaning of "kujur" is also relevant to its use by Kwoto, since the members with whom I spoke tended to speak of the kujur as a symbol of non-Islamic (or pre-Islamic) retention in Sudanese cultural traditions. That is, even as the term carries pejorative connotations in Arabic, it has simultaneously entered the discourse of some southern Sudanese. The appropriation of the kujur within Kwoto's repertoire may further be understood as the result of the "demystification" of traditional rituals by modern popular theater troupes in Africa (Kerr 140); that is, the rapid urbanization and monetization of the economy invites the transformation of ritual into secularized entertainment even as it may be losing potency in rural areas as Davidson attests.

Hybrid Traditions

Whereas the traditions I discussed above are rooted in particular communities self-identified as indigenous to the south of Sudan, the traditions I introduce here are associated with hybridization and the mixing of cultures and religious expressions.[15] Central to the forms I will introduce here is the social fact of migration and dislocation in the history of Sudan, and the position of the southerner and the ex-slave.

Zar, a term referring to a broad range of possession cults found in Africa and the Middle East, is a good example of a performance tradition that has resulted from the mixing of cultures (Boddy *Wombs* 1989; Kenyon "Zar" 1995; Lewis, Al-Safi and Hurreiz *Women's Medicine* 1991; Makris *Changing* 2000). Thought to have roots in indigenous religious rituals in either Africa or the Middle East and called a "polysemic" practice by Janice Boddy (6), zar has adapted to new circumstances and altered according to local

influences (Constantinides 1991; Trimingham 1949). Historical evidence shows that zar was already widely practiced in Ottoman Sudan (1820s) ("Zar" 505). One Beja elder, who speculated that the zar originated in Suakin due to its significance as a site for trade, identified four zar cults in his area, connecting each to a particular socio-economic group: zar Suakin was said to be practiced by women "of a good family," zar bori (boré) was the dominant zar, zar-Habashi was said to be practiced mainly by Ethiopian immigrants, and zar tumbura was "confined to those classed by the elder as 'slaves'" (Constantinides 94). Here, I focus on the distinctiveness of zar tumbura, since it is this tradition that is more closely connected to southerners in Sudan due to its association with slavery and slave descendents (Makris "Tumbura" 134; *Changing* 13 – 14; 55 – 65). Sayyid Hurreiz positions traditional zar within a framework of indigenous rituals facilitating conflict resolution and maintaining "social equilibrium" ("Zar as Ritual" 147), but of major significance for its relevance to Kwoto is Makris' insight that zar tumbura provides its followers and practitioners with ways of affirming that the "*do have* religion, descent and history" deprived to them by the material histories of slavery as well as by the dominant discourses of the north (*Changing* 4). Kwoto's theater too provides its members with access to cultural signifiers and ways of telling history that are counter to the dominant state model, but they diverge from tumbura by operating outside of Islam while the tumbura ritual locates itself on the margins of Islam, but still within its spiritual frame.

According to Constantinides, zar are "[e]ssentially cults of healing, involv[ing] ritual systems designed to cure or alleviate the symptoms of those suffering from illness or misfortune believed to have been caused by invasive spirits (in Arabic, *jinn* (spirits) or

shaitan (devils))" ("History" 83). These trance rituals traditionally operate in secret in the home of an afflicted person with other zar followers occupying the role of both participants and audience (Al- Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 2004 78). Zar practitioners incorporate drumming, singing, dancing, and the Sheikh or Sheikha who runs the ceremony, organizes the incense, props, and costumes to be worn by the possessed person as s/he enters the trance (Hurreiz "Zar" 149). Kenyon argues that the jinn, or spirits, that possess an individual are "presentations or articulations of "otherness," of outsiders or foreigners who have been historically significant" or what she also calls "aliens" and include spirits of Sufi holy men, spirits of Turkish and British colonial officials, spirits representing African peoples of Ethiopia and the far south of Sudan, spirits of nomadic Arabs and spirits of women ("Zar" 509 – 510). The theatrical elements of zar come through as participants wear costumes that represent these stock characters, such as a mustache, short-sleeved buttoned-up shirt and hat for the "colonial" (Hurreiz "Zar" 153), which will be relevant to my reading of the play *Marhoum Alif* (The Deceased X). Significantly, the repertoire of spirits is variable, and adapts to local context, such as the influx of new migrants from the south into Greater Khartoum (Kenyon "Zar" 511), which will be relevant to my reading of the play *Warnish.*

The lesser-known zar tumbura is followed by those of ex-slave and southern descent and incorporates men as officiates and members (Makris *Changing* 12). Significantly, both Constantinides and Makris highlight the connection between slave soldiers and ex-slave soldiers of the Turko-Egyptian regime and the development of tumbura; both point to the position of the Sanjak, the term for a tumbura cult-group

leader, and also a Turkish military title, as evidence for the connection (Makris "Tumbura" 125). Whereas zar boré is thought to have come to Sudan from Ethiopia or Egypt, zar tumbura is theorized as an indigenous cult adapted by enslaved southerners. Makris writes:

> [Tumbura's] origins have been traced to the western Bahr al-Ghazal region of the southern Sudan, and more specifically among the Azande tribes. The cult probably first appeared among the enslaved populations and can be regarded as a transformation of their ancestor cults into a spirit possession cult in the new cultural environment in which they found themselves, as a response to conditions of rapid social change that the people experienced. ("Tumbura" 122)

As I noted earlier, the militaries of both the Turco-Egyptian and Anglo-Egyptian regimes recruited from many ethnic groups, including the Nuba, Dinka and Shilluk, and these men were rigorously socialized into the government institution and northern milieu, eventually referred to as "detribalized Negroes" and as *Sudani* in colonial documents dating from 1898 (Makris *Changing;* Sharkey). The term sudani was adopted from northern Sudanese elite who used it to refer to those of slave descent as opposed to the "free-born Arabs" (Makris *Changing;* Sharkey). These "detribalized" men settled in areas established during the 19th century for ex-soldiers, extended during the Anglo-Egyptian period under the term "Colonization Schemes" (Sikainga "Military Slavery" 28). These settlements emerged in both rural and urban areas, with several founded in the Three Towns area. Ahmad Sikainga says of the settlements, such as Hayy al-Dubbat (The Officers' Quarter):

> With the influx of ex-slaves, West Africans, and members of the non-Arab ethnic groups the ex-soldiers' settlements became cultural and ethnic enclaves within northern Sudanese society. Although their inhabitants were broadly assimilated into the cultural norms of the northern Sudan, they retained and disseminated into

> the northern Sudan many distinctive cultural traits derived from their home areas. ("Military Slavery" 29)

"Malakiyya" became a term referring to settlements of ex-slave soldiers and those who lived there (Sikainga *Slaves* 49 – 53), and as Kenyon notes, Sudanese began referring to those who practiced tumbura, irregardless of gender, as a "Malakiyya," referring to their identity as "largely detribalized peoples from southern and western Sudan who were taken into slavery" (*Five Women* 187 – 189; Makris *Changing* 57).

Those known as "Malakiyya" are also thought to have disseminated Juba Arabic, a language Kwoto uses in their theater. Used a lingua franca amongst southerners who may speak different indigenous languages, Juba Arabic is a language of the "contact zone," of class consciousness, and social transformation. Produced in the crucible of imperial Ottoman intrusions in Bahr al-Ghazal province in the 19th century, Juba Arabic is also a product of violence and pillage:

> Although violence was the dominant form of interaction between traders and the local people, slower processes were also at work. The presence of large numbers of Arabic-speaking Muslims and their intensive interaction with the locals led to the rise within the settlements of several Arabic pidgin-creoles that eventually spread to many parts of the South. (Sikainga Western 15)

Scholars have described in depth the violence and coercion that characterized the predatory commerce for ivory and slaves in the south. Soldiers and private raiders set up zaribas, or fortified stations with thorn fences, which served as garrisons, headquarters and storage centers (Holt and Daly 70). Sikainga explains the "prevalence of a Muslim façade and pidgen Arabic" as "part of the socio-economic transformation engendered by the establishment of the zariba-system" in the south (122). These soldiers also pioneered new song genres and instrumentation influenced by their experience with military bands.

In a 2002 lecture to southern students, Kwoto Managing Director suggested that contemporary southerners reclaim the "Malakiyya" as their precursors, "There are people who came and settled in urban cities in places known as "Malakia" [sic]. We can not ignore such people, though their original culture has been influenced by a lot of borrowing from other cultures. They too constitute the fifty-one ethnic groups in Southern Sudan. It is they who coined pidgin or Juba Arabic. We have a musician like Yusif Fataki. He actually sang in Juba Arabic. He belongs to this group" (Terso "Africa College). Here, Alfred is incorporating the earlier southern migrants who negotiated southern and northern cultures, resided in such areas as urban enclaves as Mawrada noted above and became pioneers in sports (soccer) and music. By effacing the slave origins of the people he is referring to as the "Malakiyya," Alfred is able to recuperate their southern origins and resilience as a proud heritage.

It is the presence of a type and use of *nugura,* or drum/drumming, that some say tie zar tumbura to the south, slavery and indigenous rituals. Some among Makris' informants suggested that when the Azande moved North as slaves, their "nugara became zar," or, in other words, their "tribal traditions" connected to the ancestors transformed into an urban possession ritual associated with the "detribalized" (*Changing* 64). Many of his northern Sudanese informants also confused the rituals of tumbura with *Kambala* [*Kampala*], the Nuba ritual described above (*Changing* 56). This is significant in that it demonstrates patterns of social differentiation in Khartoum and the ways in which certain performance forms become associated with particular ethnic groups, in this case the descendents of slaves and other subordinates from the south and the Nuba hills. The

"nugara," or drums, are central to Kwoto's performance as well and they use a drum as their insignia for all posters and stationary (Figure 6), raising the question of the drum's symbolization of geographic and ethnic identity.

In my analysis of Kwoto's play *Marhoum Alif,* I will discuss the incorporation of ancestor ritual that, like tumbura, is adapted to an urban northern milieu, but is also secularized and theatricalized for a modern stage. The zar ritual itself has been theatricalized by its practitioners. In the 1980s, a Zar boré sheikh Mohammed Wad Hulla took the ritual and staged it as a theatrical performance on open-air stages in Khartoum (Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 2004 80; Hurreiz "Zar" 153). Sayyid Hurreiz traces the steps taken by numerous Sheikhs to register their organizations and procure endorsement from the National Council for Arts and Letters ("Zar" 153). Hurreiz theorizes these efforts as attempts to gain "respectability" among the elite, and as a gradual process of secularization of the zar, as the zar moves from "cult to club" ("Zar" 154). Al-Mubarak Mustafa notes that Wad Hulla's innovations were cut short due to the new Islamist regime's efforts to impose new definitions of Islamic orthodoxy ("Sudan" 2004 80). Too, participation in zar tumbura has dwindled, perhaps as more slave descendents assimilate further into the mainstream and do not utilize tumbura to "legitimize" their identities, and equally due to the Islamization of Sudan. According to Victoria Bernal, since the late 1980s and especially 1989, "certain forms of religious practice and belief, identified as truly Islamic because they have roots in the holy texts, are gaining ascendancy, while other Islamic practices are on the wane" (39) including zar. Of tumbura, Makris says, "Out of the eighty-two groups in the area of Greater Khartoum in the 1960s only five had

remained in 1990; today (1996) these have been reduced to two (*Changing* 10). Bernal connects this development to the socio-economic transformations that have taken place in Sudan, further integrating it into the world-system (39); these same socio-economic transformations have influenced Kwoto's theater and the way they practice it.

Colonial Influences

Respectability is a reoccurring theme in the history of theater and performance in Sudan. Sikainga notes the widespread perception in Sudan that the performing arts and singing are associated with servile origins, despite the fact that northern Sudanese men dominated professional singing (*Slaves* x). In her discussion of urban female *tom-tom* singers, Saadia Malik introduces how the binary of "tradition" and "modernity" is illustrated through the dichotomy drawn between "ghanaya" and "fanana" in the 1930s and 40s with increasing urbanization and dissemination of colonial media outlets and therefore public performance. She shows how the construction of the *fanana,* or trained artist, depends on its opposing term *ghanaya* defined as an untrained, uneducated singer (and often ex-slave) who is perceived as a mimic, or someone who performs songs without reworking them creatively (104 – 105). Both fanana and ghanaya are gendered terms whose definitions are negotiated against the example of male singers who set the standards for respectability in the performance sphere (Malik 52 – 54). For example, certain female singers in the 1940s were lauded as "decent fananaat" due to their performance of male genres (Malik 54). Kwoto directors too used the term *fanan* to describe their role as artists, and also told me that their dances should be called *"raqs"* (the standard Arabic term for dance) rather than *nugara* which, as already noted, people

use to identify drumming, and also traditional dances practiced by and within specific ethnic groups.

According to Al-Mubarak Mustafa, the movement of theater from the margins to the center was in part due to the influence of four men who came from "good families" and therefore bestowed the profession with requisite respectability ("Sudan" 2004, 80), which also meant the adoption of Aristotelian forms of structuring and conceptualizing theater. The growth of the Aristotelian form of theater took place first in the cities and urban centers of northern Sudan and only later developed in the south. Stagings of Arabic plays and translations of European theater into Arabic began during the Ottoman era (1847) and continued throughout the Anglo-Egyptian period, reaching an apex after the establishment of the Gordon Memorial College in 1902, which became a space for the teaching of Shakespeare and performances for both civilians and troops. Like in other African contexts, the colonial schools became a vehicle for the introduction of European written drama, and, again, like other contexts, the military influence permeated indigenous forms.[16] It was not only military personnel who became involved in theater; civil servants (*effendi*) from across Sudan joined theatrical clubs. For example, the 'Acting Benevolent Literary Society' was formed by both Coptic Christian and Muslim employees in Port Sudan and represented the first amateur dramatic society (1916 – 1924) (Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 2004, 81).

It was in the 1930s, with nationalist feeling pervading the urban centers, that plays were first written and performed in Sudanese colloquial, which became a vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiment and class identity. As we will see, Kwoto's theater

practitioners recognize language as an ideological as well as artistic choice, and view the use of Juba Arabic as a means to reflect the ideas and culture of the subaltern strata. Before the 1930s in Sudan, playwrights and directors engaged in debates informed by Egyptian artists, about the appropriate language for the stage. In an article on the topic of language in Arabic drama, Elsaid Badawi calls it "the continuing debate" and explains that the prestige and legitimacy of *Fusha,* or classical Arabic, has in some cases led to the "eradication of the colloquial in formal instruction" and written texts (19 – 20; also see Al-Mubarak Mustafa *Arabic* 1986). Despite the pervasiveness of colloquial in daily conversation and its importance to local identity and expression, it is still perceived as lacking the cache and respectability of Fusha, and playwrights who experimented with colloquial in their artistic works in the mid-19th century Arab world risked severe criticism and censure from the press and the public (Badawi "Arab Theatre" 20). Eventually, Fusha became associated with serious genres while colloquial was relegated to comedies and "local themes" (21). Significantly, colloquial Sudanese, as a manifestation of "tradition" and local identity, has at times come to represent "women's talk" (*kalam al niswaan*) for elite northern men (Bernal "Gender" 52). It was not until 1933 that Sudanese playwright Khalid Abdul Rous (1908 – 85) produced the first play in Sudanese dialect, basing his drama on the legend of Tajuj (Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 1998, 224; Abdallah 71 – 76). In 1937, Ibrahim Al-Abbadi wrote *Al Mak Nimir,* which dramatized growing nationalist sentiment, and the rejection of parochial loyalties to "tribe" (Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 2004, 81). The plays carried anti-colonial messages, which raised the ire of officials, and expressed messages of unity, especially

the unity among men, for which women were the conduit or obstacle. The use of Sudanese colloquial in both plays may be interpreted as an expression of nationalism, and also an attempt to carve out a new Sudanese identity against the hegemony of Egyptian Arabic dominant on stage at that time. Not all Sudanese were happy about these new staged productions. In them, male actors cross-dressed, since women appearing on stage was not acceptable at the time; some religious leaders grew upset over what they called "public transvestism" in *Tajuj* and censured Abdul Rous (Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 1998, 225). Besides suffering from religious objections, Sudanese theater fought under-financing, and relative indifference and apathy by a public caught up in political struggles. Al-Mubarak Mustafa argues that with the rise of the nationalist movement and more open avenues for political protest, official theater waned as a venue for expression ("Sudan" 1998 225), reviving after independence.

Another relevant development during the colonial period is the impact of mission schools and Christianity on southern performance traditions, and especially songs. Kwoto's directors say they are non-partisan in their selection of members, however, both their professed aim to represent the "cultures of the South," their use of specific spaces for performances, some of their rehearsal practices, and the way their recruitment tactics rely on the network of Churches, arguably shape and limit their pool of interested candidates to Christians. Therefore it is apt to take into account very briefly the transformation of southern traditions in their encounter with Christianity, using Kwoto's appropriation and representation of Christian spaces and identities as a starting point.

While I was in Khartoum, Kwoto used the large elevated concrete stage and spacious courtyard at St. Matthew's, a Catholic Church built in 1875 on Nile Avenue for their rehearsals. When performing within displaced areas, they appeared within structures located in the area's parish; and their Anniversary Shows occurred on the Comboni Playground built in 1929 in the center of Khartoum and named for Ottoman-era Italian Bishop Daniel Comboni, who was canonized as a Saint by the Vatican in 2004. As noted in the introduction, under Bishop Daniel Comboni, the Catholic Church initiated programs for native evangelists, and many formerly enslaved southerners in the north became incorporated into this system. Some, like Bakhita, a former slave from Dar Fur, were gradually constructed by both Catholic officials and laypeople, into symbols of Catholic piety and tolerance and virtuous "southern" personhood.[17] Bakhita has also been transformed into an object of worship and was canonized as a Saint in 2001. Changing their names and their dress, these converted slaves spread powerful new rhetorics of unity, liberation and transcendence that have spoken to recent generations of exiled and displaced southerners. Though contemporary southern migrants do not recognize their ancestors as "slaves," many carry profound identifications with past slave figures who converted to Christianity such as Bakhita. The much-publicized resurgence of slavery in Sudan and contemporary northerners' referral to southerners as *'abd* and *abeed* (slave) strengthens the identification (Jok *War* 21 – 41). This identification was true of Kwoto performers, and during both plays and dances both male and female performers wore cloth wrap skirts and arm-bands with Bakhita's portrait imprinted as adornment (Figures 8 and 9). Even though the infiltration of Christian missions was

largely resisted by the mass populace for most of the colonial period, its status as the only source of modern education ensured it would impact southern societies (Deng *War* 185 – 239; Sanderson *Education* 100; Werner *Day*). With the influence of the Southern Policy of 1930, vernacular education dominated mission education in southern Sudan at the primary level, and vernacular drama developed alongside drama in English (Sanderson *Education* 51 – 170), thus creating a situation where many "traditions" were "preserved" through indirect rule. From 1920s to 1945, there were substantial communities of Christians in southern Sudan (Wheeler "Sudan's" 16). Wheeler attributes the "revitalization of African ethnic identity" to the "provision of education and the Bible in vernacular languages ("Sudan's" 25). In a book-length study, Marc Nikkel traces the development of "Dinka Christianity" and the emergence of Christian hymns and songs in indigenous languages.

Postcolonial Developments

Kwoto Cultural Center takes advantage of many of the most modern buildings and structures available in Khartoum, many of which were built after independence in 1956. After independence, three events occurred that paved the way for the development of an official theater community: the construction of a National Theatre, the establishment of a National Folk Dance Troupe and the founding of the Institute of Music and Drama (IMD). In the late 1950s, plans went forward to construct a national theatre in Khartoum based on previous blueprints during the colonial era (Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 1998, 225). From 1959 onward, General Abboud and his government used the space for diplomatic efforts and invited companies from abroad to perform ("Sudan"

2004, 81). The building today reflects a restructuring that took place in 1967 and up until this day does not sponsor a resident company. The National Folk Dance Troupe, established in 1966 with direction from Soviet artists, is sponsored by the state, and remains the only fully professional, salaried troupe. Their permanent repertoire includes dances from fifteen ethnic groups, and they rehearse in Omdurman where they also have a theater space that can accommodate up to 300 spectators.

All of Kwoto's directors were born in the postcolonial period: Samani was born in 1958 in Bor; Stephen Ochalla was born in 1967 in Akobo on the Ethiopian border and spent most of his youth in Juba where his father became a soldier for the newly formed national government after the Addis Ababa peace accords were signed in 1972, ending the first phase of the civil war (1955 – 1972); and Derik Alfred was born in 1962 in Wau. Samani and Derik attended the same secondary school, run by missionaries, where they were involved in journalism and drama groups, and each decided to attend Sudan's premiere Institute of Music and Drama (IMD), a four-year institution described by theater scholar, critic and former dean Al-Mubarak Mustafa as the "most decisive factor in the development of theatre in Sudan" ("Sudan" 1998, 232). Samani and Derik received their degrees in theater in 1985 and 1989 respectively. Like many other national institutions located in the center, the IMD did not enroll many southern students at first, and so Samani and Derik are among the first southern graduates of the IMD.[18] Additionally, Samani was employed by the National Folklore Dance Troupe as a choreographer in 1987. He also directed the play *Masat Yerol* (*The Tragedy of Yerol*), based on a Dinka

Yerol legend, which was produced by Al-Sadim theater, an avant garde street theater troupe, but banned by authorities (Musa 145).

According to Al-Mubarak Mustafa, as of 1998, there were approximately twelve semi-professional and amateur troupes whose seasons were presented "without financial guarantees" (Al-Mubarak "Sudan" 1998, 226). The troupes must submit a proposed play and schedule to the National Theatre in order to secure a place and typically receive a two-week run. If a troupe attracts a large, paying audience, they may transfer to the 2000-seat commercial venue Friendship Hall, another space utilized by Kwoto, and located in the center of Khartoum. Besides the establishment of the National Theatre and National Folk Dance Troupe, the founding of the IMD in 1969 was a significant moment in the creation of a theater community in Sudan as it led to a group of trained professionals in the field, including two of the directors of Kwoto.

Nimeri's military government (1969 – 1985) again employed the theater as a venue for the performance of diplomacy and politics. In 1971, the State Acrobatic Company was formed comprised of seventy-one child acrobats trained by Chinese experts in China and Sudan (Al- Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 1998 231). By 1972, the dictatorial regime established a Department of Culture which, along with the National Council for Arts and Letters, controlled all cultural activities including the theater, making it an ambivalent time for artists who sought to take advantage of the government support for the arts as best they could, and in 1977, the Department of Culture was part of the Ministry of Information and Culture (Abdel Hai "Cultural" 25). In his UNESCO sponsored study of Sudanese culture in the 1970s, Abdel Hai claims that the "Drama and

Variety" section of the Ministry of Culture must "overcome the lack of any authentic dramatic tradition in the cultural heritage" of Sudan (26), and suggests that the "semi-dramatic" forms found in "tribal rites and religious practices" could serve as sources for the development of a bold, modern, international theater art ("Cultural" 26). Especially with the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Accord in 1972, which ended the first civil war, the government promoted bi-annual cultural festivals, some of which were called "Unity Festivals" that included theatrical performances, and invested in the construction of theatrical buildings and infrastructure, including open-air theaters in many provinces, including Kassala, Port Sudan, Medani, Al-Damazin, Dongola, Al-Obeid, Al-Nuhood, Nyala, Al-Fashir and Juba (Al Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 1998, 226). During an interview, Kwoto's Managing Director Derik Uya Alfred observed that it was during the era of the Unity Festivals that the big entertainment structures, such as the regional theaters and sports complexes were built (Personal Interview).

One significant structure in Juba was Nyokuron, which Alfred describes as a "regional center where there was a cinema house, a sports center, a theater and a nightclub," and Al Mubarak Mustafa describes the regional center as a "multipurpose conference center built with Kuwaiti aid" ("Sudan" 1998, 232). As the regional capital of the South during the eleven year period of peace (1972 – 1983), Juba became a hub of theatrical activity for southern elites, most of whom were educated in mission schools and in English. Kwoto directors point to the 1960s and to a man pseudonymously named Amouna Kabase as an example of "southern modernity" and a "pioneer of southern theater" (Samani "Limits" 3). This returned soldier performed one-man traveling shows

in the streets and bars of Juba, using Juba Arabic. By employing the language of the contact zone in his performance, Kabase expressed the culture of the subaltern strata. Little is known about his life, but according to interviews, Kabase was diagnosed with leprosy upon his return to Juba and lived in a leper colony. Up until 1965, the government took care of the growing population of lepers, but after that they were moved outside the city and abandoned. Kabase began using his traveling act as a way to raise money and support his community, an example that Kwoto directors cite as an inspiration for the community-based performance they seek to create (Alfred Personal Interview).

With the new influx of capital and optimism into Juba in the 1970s, artists started to produce plays and create troupes, the most renowned being Skylark, founded in 1978 by Joseph Abuk Lo 'Diyo, who also managed the Nyokuron between 1987 – 1992 (Al Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 1998, 226; Alfred, Personal Interview). Alfred says that he believes that this moment in the 1970s was the "beginning of trying to make something very concrete – of trying to create formal regional theaters" (Personal Interview). He notes that the bi-cultural "Unity" festivals started by Nimeiri alternated between the three main southern provincial capitals, starting in Juba in 1973, moving to Malakal in 1974 and to Wau in 1975 and adds "Within this festival there were exhibitions of different cultures' arts, daily competitions between football, basketball and volleyball teams, and evening theatrical and dance programs. The festival also became an important site for the various ethnic groups of the South to learn and know about one another through the arts" (Personal Interview). Alfred also notes that some of the most successful efforts in drama

occurred through Radio Juba. I quote him at length regarding some of the developments in drama in Juba during the 1970s:

> Radio Juba covered the whole South and operated in English as well as in Juba Arabic. That initiative was initially made through the Sudan Council of Churches in Juba. During the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, educational institutions in the South often operated through Church and missionary efforts. In Juba, in the 1970s, the Sudan Council of Churches ran a small studio where they produced drama to address the problems of the South. And since Juba was the regional capital, with all the facilities and resources, it was also the place where problems relating to the exercising of autonomy were most keenly felt. People wanted to address their social problems in the drama of the time, and radio plays such as *Beenu wa Beenak* (*Between You and Me*) and *As Sahha Tabda Min Al Beit* (*Health Begins at Home*) were produced. Contributers varied, and included such figures as writer Malika Benjamin, and actor Angelo Lokoyame. Radio became a very popular medium because it was cheap, and even if you did not have a radio, you could go to your neighbor's house or a nearby pub to listen to the shows. Another site of theatrical activity was the schools. Periodically, there would be drama competitions between schools and sometimes skits were used in classrooms as entertainment or pedagogy. So, all of these areas were flourishing in the 1970s after the signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement and their development was of course linked to the newfound peace and stability in the region. (Personal Interview)

Al Mubarak Mustafa too notes the efflorescence of theatrical activity during the 1970s and says that the decade saw "the emergence of an unprecedented number of well-organized theatrical companies, which made maximum use of the National Cultural Festival, an event organized regularly by the government" ("Sudan" 1998, 226).

As Alfred mentions, southern theater remained both directly and loosely tied to church institutions, a result of the historical position of the churches in the development of the south (Sanderson *Education*). Mark Nikkel describes the importance of Christian *nadin* (clubs) in Khartoum during the 1960s for Dinka migrants who moved there in search of work ("Aspects" 80); there, these disenfranchised youth spoke and sung in their vernacular languages and so "affirm[ed] and assert[ed] their identity in an alien

environment" (80). According to Alfred, to some extent it is still true today that some churches provide a venue and support for a variety of cultural activities, especially in the displaced area outside Khartoum (Personal Interview). Although not sponsored by the Church, or officially connected to any religious institution, Kwoto's operations took place in an environment permeated by a Christian ethos. Responding to an interview question, Alfred confirmed that many of Kwoto's members have been singers in local church congregations. I also observed that the troupe stood in a circle and recited the Lord's prayer before or after every rehearsal. When I inquired into the nature of the connection between Kwoto and the Church, I was sometimes told that it was for the most part practical and strategic. That is, in a city where public space is at a premium, and many places were hostile to southerners, Christians, theater artists, or a combination of these, the Church courtyard represented an available, affordable alternative. I was usually reminded that with the Islamization of public space, the Church represented a protected space.[19] At other times, Alfred and Ochalla said that the Church was widely revered for having stayed in the south when government and non-governmental institutions were perceived as abandoning the area. My observation of Kwoto's activities and contexts suggests that the Christian ethos offers a wider and deeper sense of identity and purpose which they integrate as part of their performance practices.

The contemporary spread of evangelical Christianity among southern peoples has also resulted in the renunciation of performance forms and strengthening of patriarchy. In the early 1990s, anthropologist Sharon Hutchinson returned to the Nuer communities among whom she had researched ten years prior. She found that a particularly puritanical

strain of Protestantism had taken root and all forms of dancing were outlawed by local male church leaders. Significantly, dancing was grouped by these leaders with drinking home-brewed beer and smoking tobacco as "fundamentally 'un-Christian' forms of sociality" (*Nuer Dilemmas* 336). Thus, a new adherence to particular forms of Christianity worked to eliminate attachments to behaviors and performances defined as "traditional." Other forms of Western influence have also appeared to affect the manifestation of performance forms. For example, after traveling to Khartoum Nuer men carried new fashions back to their villages. Hutchinson includes a photo in her ethnography of a line of Nuer male dancers sporting leg warmers, sneakers and tight pocketed shorts. She says these goods have become a kind of status display. Nuer female dancers carry books, flashlights and other imported display items in the place of dancing rods (*Nuer Dilemmas* 211).

As already noted, the 1983 turn to shari'a as state law and the 1989 coup by the National Islamic Front and the Islamization of the Arts policies changed the theater landscape as well. According to Al Mubarak Mustafa, the NIF were, and remain, openly inimical to theater; non-Islamic rituals are frowned upon and even Islamic Sufi rituals are seen as aberrations because they have no basis in 'orthodox Sunni Islam' ("Sudan" 2004 82). The IMD "lost its autonomy and became an appendix of Sudan University" (Al-Mubarak Mustafa "Sudan" 2004, 82). As noted in the introduction, the Islamist regime has worked to redefine social space in Sudan to conform to notions of proper Islamic community, undermining "traditional" and sectarian loyalties and defining and controlling the influx of "modern" institutions (Bernal "Gender" 36 – 67; Hageeb 16).

For example, as already noted above, zar possession rituals were outlawed in 1989 by Islamist authorities seeking to propagate a new, textualist and orthodox version of Islam. Al Mubarak Mustafa notes that in the early 1980s, the government attempted to eliminate the Ministry of Culture and Information and shifted the National Folk Dance Troupe under the aegis of the Ministry of Defense for a short period ("Sudan" 1998, 227). Although no legislation was passed regarding formal theater productions, religious authorities condemned any activity that brought men and women in close proximity, and theater activity ceased in the north. Furthermore, the new government initiated new regulations as part of the Public Order Act of 1991 that had direct and indirect effects on theater activities. Public-order courts and police were established and upheld new laws such as the 1992 Khartoum Act compelling women to wear the hijab, the outlawing of *ghanaya* (women singers) in public, and an 11pm curfew for celebrations and parties (Hageeb 19 – 21; Malik 47). When the civil war restarted in the south in 1983, theater gradually came to a standstill there as well. More insidiously, the government banned plays or shows that they argued "did not fit into the national project for the resurrection of culture" (Musa "Cultural" 146).[20]

The play titles, such as "Health Begins at Home" that Derik Uya Alfred cites during the interview excerpts above also makes clear the influence of the "theater for development" (TfD) movement in 1970s southern Sudan, often connected to a church-based initiative (Personal Interview). Some of the best known TfD initiatives in northern Sudan occurred with the assistance of outside non-profit organizations dedicated to this type of theater. For example, a British group called Small World Theatre has

implemented puppet theater campaigns in the northern town of Shendi since the mid-1980s. In the 1980s, Stephen Ochalla was involved in TfD efforts connected with churches. He enrolled in advanced courses in drama, music and painting at the Palace for Youth and Children in Omdurman, and in 1987 founded his first drama group, calling it Sou, short for Southerner. In 1988, Sou produced Stephen's first play entitled *Al-Talib Al-Janoubii Fi Al-Shamal* (A Southern Student in the North) and performed it in As-Salaam, one of the four official displaced camps set up at the outskirts of the capital (Personal Interview).[21] Much more recently, prompted by the media coverage of the Dar Fur violence, ITI organized theater workshops in 2004 in Khartoum addressing issues around conflict resolution. Inspired by these workshops, the director of ITI, Thomas Engel, in collaboration with theater practitioners in Sudan including Ali Mahdi Nouri, established a Sudanese NGO called the Centre for Theatre in Conflict Zones in 2006 with Egyptian Nora Amin appointed as its coordinator. According to the group's online publicity materials:

> Professional actors from Khartoum, Darfur, southern and eastern Sudan have been trained in the "Forum Theatre" method which they are now implementing among refugees in Sudan's crisis regions. The actors are using these theatre techniques in reconstruction efforts, including repatriation projects, to help rebuild social identities and cultural links through dialogue and discussion.

Furthermore, a workshop was held in the southern town of Malakal and another two workshops in Dar Fur and one in Khartoum for people for southern Sudan. Finally, in December 2006, the third international workshop was held in Khartoum on the methods of the "Theatre of the Oppressed" / the Forum Theatre of Augusto Boal led by Barbra Santos, coordinator of the Theatre of the Oppressed in Brazil.

TfD refers to a range of practices and both the content and methods of TfD are much debated and contested (Abah and Etherton; Kerr; Mda; Mlama). Zakes Mda refers to the two possible "agents" of TfD initiatives as the 1.) government representatives and 2.) autonomous practitioners (15). David Kerr notes two sources for theater for development practice: what he calls the "colonial tradition of theatre as propaganda" and "another more radical tradition of community theatre" often associated with Brazilian educator Paulo Friere and his 1972 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Brazilian theater artist Augusto Boal's application of Freirian principles to theater in his 1979 book *Theatre of the Oppressed* (*African* 149). Developed for radical literacy campaigns in Brazil, Freire theories of conscientization and liberation were enacted through a process of workshops and literacy practices that would empower rural, working-class and poor adults to equip themselves with the tools to develop a critical analysis of their social conditions (Freire *Pedagogy*; also see Mda *When*). Boal's concept of "theatre as a discourse" emphasized theater as processual, participatory and collaborative. His methods utilize a catalyst (called a Joker) and re-centered the audience as "spec-actors" and co-creators of a drama rather than passive recipients of a finished product (*Theatre* 32 – 42). The processes utilized by many TfD practitioners include: information-gathering from among community members on issues and genres, information analysis, story improvisation, rehearsal, public performance, discussion and follow-up action (Mda 159). Boal devised a number of methods to engage audiences in the theater-making process: simultaneous dramaturgy and image theater refer to when actors perform a scene, freeze at a crisis point and ask audience members for a solution; forum theater, on

the other hand, more thoroughly embeds audience members in the play as they are invited to come up and take the place of any actor to reorient the story (Boal 126; Mda 66).

Kerr notes that very few TfD initiatives managed to attain the ideal of Friere's and Boal's models, and to evade perpetuating the ideology of domination and paternalism that suffused the discourses of development and modernization. One of the main reasons for this is the central role played by community elites and institutional agendas in the TfD process, and the corollary that TfD is very rarely "popular" or truly "grassroots" (Kerr *African* 159). According to some critics, TfD is often associated with the needs or agendas of government ministries or non- and semi-governmental agencies, distancing the projects (and the formats and modes used) from the communities (Mda 48). Even those programs that moved into university settings ran into conflicts over the practical, theoretical and ideological distance that separated their elite student theater workers from the rural people who were the ostensible beneficiaries in the theater workshops; and Boal himself says that caution must be taken when the educator, even if a native, comes with a "mission" since that "presupposes a coercive, forceful action" (*Theatre* 127).

One of the best known, best documented theater for development campaigns occurred in Botswana in the 1970s under the name Laedza Batanani, a group which staged plays on stray cattle, nutrition, venereal disease and sanitation among others over a period of approximately four years (Kerr *African* 152). This description of the Laedza Batanani campaigns, written when it was at its height, echoes some of Kwoto's publicity materials:

> Popular theatre includes performances of drama, puppetry, singing, and dancing. These performances are called 'popular' because they are aimed at the whole

> community, not just the educated. They are performed in local languages and deal with local problems so everyone can understand them and find them useful… This new type of theatre in Botswana builds on local ability and interest in story-telling, singing, poetry and dancing. (qtd in Kerr 151)

Kerr makes the point that this theater need not be viewed as entirely "new"; rather, one may see the roots of TfD in didactic precolonial performance forms, such as storytelling and initiation rituals, but Mda notes that formats such as puppetry are alien to some communities' own forms and may therefore constrain the project's aim to communicate and engage audiences (46). But according to Kerr, with the influence of migrant labor and rapid urbanization, many communities had lost touch with traditional performance forms, which led to a "vacuum" in social relations that could potentially be filled by popular theater forms (Kerr 152), but he cautions that the role of elites and conceptual blindnesses could potentially lead to the "depopularization" of these projects, or, in other words, the disconnection of the subject and aesthetic choices from the subaltern people for whom the theater was meant.[22]

The role of elites in shaping the aims of the theater content and process is relevant too to the work of Kwoto, as is the shifting degrees of intimacy and distance between Kwoto directors and members, directors and audiences, and members and audiences. One cannot easily generalize using terms such as "outsiders" and "insiders" with regards to Kwoto performers and their audiences, although interviews suggested that some members felt a subjective sense of distance from the poorest displaced peoples, perhaps in part due to their experience with Kwoto and role as actors. The directors of Kwoto are southerners, but their education and changing class position potentially creates a similar distance between theater producer/community recipients that has marked other TfD

initiatives. One southern male observer told me when interviewed that he felt Kwoto had gone "professional" which to him meant a disconnection from audiences wherein the implementation of a consumer-oriented model of theater dominated and the shows ended after the performance with no after-show discussion (Personal Interview). However, for many TfD practitioners, such as Mda, some critical distance is needed for the Catalyst to have critical awareness and function properly.

Alfred's and Kwoto's interest in utilizing Boal's methods echo others' in their hope that the widespread adoption of a more participatory theater will effect a more profound democratization of civil society in Sudan. During an interview, Alfred expressed his desire to stage more impromptu performances "at bus stops, on the streets, in the markets" but said he felt that the prevailing ethos and laws of Khartoum prevented the implementation of spontaneous acts of performance (Personal Interview). Alfred wrote about Boal in a 2001 essay entitled "Improvisation: a Way of Producing Shows." In this essay, Alfred translates Boal's (and Friere's) concept of the "oppressed" as "muqahurrin" (conquered, oppressed), and discusses Boal's methods of Forum Theater as they relate to the *naziheen,* or displaced, of Khartoum. Especially important to Alfred in this particular essay is the notion of theater's use by "non-professionals," and he quotes Boal's notion of "theater as a language, capable of being utilized by any person, with or without artistic talent. We tried to show in practice how the theater can be placed at the service of the oppressed, so that they can express themselves and so that, by using this new language, they can also discover new concepts" (Alfred 6 – 7; Boal *Theatre* 121 – 122).

Kwoto's Plays: Acting Southern in the North

The preponderance of Kwoto plays are about fission and division among families and communities, and almost all warn audiences of the disasters that await those who deny connection to kin. In *Chelo,* a young man takes advantage of his father by convincing him to sell his best cows so he can go to Khartoum, but when the father reaches him later, the son denies knowing him. In *Jal Dowang Ajak,* an elder implores his children to follow tradition, but they refuse and later regret it. In this section, I read four of Kwoto's plays and highlight their preoccupation with the transformation of kinship in the context of relations among specific ethnic groups, among southerners and between southerners and those who are to different degrees external to that community.

As described earlier, Kwoto's plays may be divided into two categories: improvisational skits, called *sketch* or *irtijal* (improvisation), which last approximately 10 – 20 minutes and scripted plays called *nas* (text), which may last anywhere from thirty minutes to one hour (Ochalla Personal Interview). While improvisations are not ascribed an author, all of the scripted plays do have authors, noted on the title page of each script. A typical title page reads: "Kwoto Cultural Center Presents: *The Deceased X,* written and directed by Stephen Affear Ochalla." If a play is a translation and adaptation, that is noted on the title page as well. While I was in Khartoum, Kwoto performed only two improvisations: one was *Haj Youssef* and the other was *Al-Hoosh,* which was written by Ochalla but was semi-improvised while performed. Kwoto's directors also utilized improvisations during rehearsals in order to develop the member's skills in acting, and as a Boalian technique in helping members explore their social positions (Boal *Theatre*

126). Boal argues that any theater with subaltern or working classes or those not versed in professional theater must begin with exercises designed to make participants more aware of their bodies, eventually turning them into "expressive" vessels (127 – 131). In this next section, I introduce and analyze four plays *Haj Yousif, Al-Hoosh, Warnish* and *Marhoum Alif,* produced by Kwoto. In the first three plays, *Haj Yousif, Al-Hoosh* and *Warnish,* Kwoto's directors and members fictionalize the "southern" family and put their conflicts on a stage with a bicameral separation between performers and spectators. In doing so, these performances provide a critical distance between the "family" and spectators. The theater convenes these spectators and attempts to transform them not only into a "theater-going" public but into "southerners" who will engage in analysis and self-critique.

Haj Yousif is fully improvised, *Al Hoosh* is semi-improvised and *Warnish* is scripted with improvisation called for at moments in the script. The content of *Haj Yousif, Al-Hoosh* and *Warnish* are rooted in social realism; that is, the subject matter draws on the issues faced by contemporary southerners, including rural-urban migration, social stratification, changing gender norms, and generational tensions. But even with the "social realist" content, the performances are non-illusionistic and highly presentational. In the last play in this section, *Marhoum Alif,* which is again a scripted drama, "family" takes on a different meaning as Kwoto members perform the deceased members of the community who rise from their graves. In a conclusion to this chapter, I briefly address Kwoto's forays into adaptation of literary drama with a look at one director's dramaturgical decisions when staging Jean Genet's *Les Nègres* as *Geragir* in Khartoum.

Finding Haj Yousif and Authenticating Identity: A Displaced Topography

Some of the plays listed in the repertoire, including "African Family," "Gidadat" ("Chickens"), "Kwoto," "Al Mara al-Naziha" ("The Displaced Woman"), "Lopijut" ("Nightmare") and others began as improvisations (Appendix B).[23] Some remain improvisations and others are "stabilized" as they are continuously performed and become repeatable stories, even if they remain unscripted (Etherton 13). *Haj Yousif* was the only true improvisation that Kwoto performed while I was in Khartoum, and thus it will serve as an example of Kwoto's use of improvisation. For the analysis, I draw from my videotape of the performance at St. Stephanus, in an outlying shantytown. Although most of my comments here will refer directly to Haj Yousif, I will also draw on other brief examples from improvisational exercises during rehearsals and commentary on improvisation from interviews and essays. I suggest here that the process of improvisation, and especially the process of characterization and casting in this play prompts Kwoto members to think more critically and self-consciously about the construction of southern political identities. The content of the drama, which was also shaped and influenced by the directors of the troupe, appeals to the importance of modern education and literacy but also the overcoming of parochialism and need for a southern unity.

Haj Yousif is an improvisation that attempts to dramatize the general feelings of confusion, disorientation, frustration and alienation that occur as southern families make their way to Khartoum. Like many other Kwoto plays, it displays an ambivalent and

contradictory attitude toward the rural southerners who serve as the center of the drama; the *ahli/ahlia* (rural men and women, also called *baladi/baladia*) are valued as moral and honorable, but lampooned as naïve and ignorant as well. To complicate matters, the rural southerners are confronted in this improvisation, as they are in many others, by urbanized southerners who are quick to take advantage of their rural counterparts. The improvisation makes visible the artificiality of the ethnic, occupational and provincial divides among southerners, and suggests that these very divides are the source of southerners' victimization. The improvisation and the choices members made in producing it point inwards at southerners' own responsibility for contemporary conflicts and divisions. In dramatizing the sources of conflict, the improvisation also optimistically opens the possibility for personal agency and creativity in determining new outcomes. Here, I will briefly describe the improvisation and outline its historical context. Afterwards, I will suggest possible meanings embedded in the performance.

Haj Yousif begins with two southern families arriving in Khartoum armed with nothing but their knowledge of the phrase "Haj Yousif," which they know refers to a place where their relatives reside. During the preparation for the performance, the members, with input from Kwoto's directors, decided where the families were from and how they should be represented. A few members suggested that the families be made up of solely a mother and her children, since men often migrate earlier for work in the capital only to be joined by other members later. Indeed, Ochalla reported during an interview that sections of the south were called *"rajul ma fi"* meaning "no men" or "no-man's land," a double-entendre referring both to the emptiness of the land due to repeated

bombings and the lack of actual men after their enlistment in the military, their migration to labor in the north, or their sheer will to escape (Personal Interview). Having the families represented only by a woman furthers the image of the vulnerability of the southern family in Khartoum, and genders the southerner as female. This choice to depict the southern family as female-headed may have also been informed by the general feminization of poverty and the feminization of crime in Khartoum, where southern women are imprisoned in greater numbers for their participation in prostitution and beer-brewing, two occupations southern women resort to in order to support their families (Bekker). Other members wanted the families to include a father, and the reasons given included that they wanted the "entire southern family" shown during the improvisation; this time, the family was defined as a nuclear family with a mother, a father and a child. After some debate, and influence by the director, it was decided that the families should be portrayed as mothers with their children.

There was unanimity among members that the families should be from different provinces in order to dramatize the geographic and ideological divides among southerners. As I mentioned both in the Introduction and earlier in this chapter, intra-southern hostilities are seen as part of the reason for the failure of southern regionalism promised by the 1972 peace accords. M. A. Muhammad Salih, among others, called the internal fragmentation of the south "retribalization" ("Tribal" 65 – 82). Moreover, although the SPLM had gone some way toward achieving "unity" amongst southerners, after its collapse into two forces in 1991, soldiers turned more frequently to primordialist concepts of ethnicity based on "procreative metaphors of shared human blood"

(Hutchinson and Jok "Gendered" 105). Kwoto's emergence, plays such as Haj Yousif, and the member's choices in characterization must be viewed within this historical context. Members decided that one family would originate from Equatoria State (Bari family) and the other family would come from Upper Nile (Dinka family); as I noted earlier, Equatoria is popularly known as the province of many agricultural groups, and Upper Nile the home of most of the pastoralists – thus the improvisation and a comprehension of its message depends on a knowledge of the stereotypes drawn from the agriculturalist/pastoralist divide, as well as the "anti-Dinka" sentiment among Equatorians. Audience members may identify the origins of the families through their use of language – they pepper their calls with Dinka and Bari names, and mention places in the provinces of the South – but the characters do not dress in any manner that will distinguish them from one another. Significantly, other of Kwoto's improvisations and plays also depend on challenging the geographic and ideological divides of the south. For example, director Ochalla mentioned the importance of having the three women imprisoned in the improvisation "Gidadat" ("Chickens") from the three different provinces: Equatoria, Upper Nile, and Bahr al-Ghazal (Ochalla Personal Interview). In both improvisations, the divisions between the actors are shown to be contingent, invented, and an obstacle to progress.

As noted earlier, Greater Khartoum has witnessed dramatic growth over recent decades and its sprawling settlements on the peripheries continue to grow. Although southerners have been migrating northward for over a century, as described earlier and in the introduction to this dissertation, it was in the mid- to late-1980s that hundreds of

thousands of southerners arrived to the Three Towns area, this time fleeing warfare and war-induced famines (Burr and Collins *Requiem* 88). The choice of Haj Yousif as the title of the improvisation highlights its importance as a marker in the displaced landscape in Khartoum. Haj Yousif was one of the first settlements on the western desert outskirts of the city, and as a "shantytown" rather than an official displaced camp, was unregulated by the international agencies and government (Burr and Collins Requiem 88). The importance of Haj Yousif cannot be underestimated since most southerners in Khartoum stress the role of contacts above all else as an access to resources in the city. According to interviewees and NGO sources, Haj Yousif and other settlements serve as an unofficial and constantly updated telephone book and living map of the city (Gregory Personal Interview; Loveless 25). If one could not find one's relatives there, or at least a clue as to their whereabouts, it was unlikely one could find them anywhere in Khartoum. By 1986, Haj Yousif had grown to encompass 100,000 displaced persons, with small towns (Takmul, Wihda, Barona, Shigla) evolving within its borders (Burr and Collins *Requiem* 88). Today, it is still a popular destination, and has become a sprawling city unto itself, complete with donkey carts, markets and landlords. The extended family networks criss-crossing the informal settlements and shantytowns illustrate the continuing power of family and kinship ties in the face of urbanization and modernization. But, as Giddens suggests, the apparent resurgence or maintenance of kinship ties in modern contexts does not meant they serve the same purposes as they did in premodern contexts (18 – 19). While kinship networks still play an important role within households, their political

power outside the domestic sphere is weakened in Khartoum as officers of the law and representatives of the central government assume roles that maintain social order.

When the Dinka and Bari families anxiously call out for the family members on stage, they enact the expectation that the kinship tie will serve as a basis for their identity, a safety net and refuge; what they are met with, however, is deafening silence on stage, and a few giggles and calls from the audience such as *"ya fara"* (oh, naïve ones!). The next group of characters to arrive on stage play up the ambiguity of what it means to be "southerner" and deceptiveness of ethnic identification. First, two young urbanized southern men sneak up and circle the families. The two families cannot communicate, and the action on stage turns to physical comedy. The two boys steal the few pieces of produce that the rural families carry with them, and start to juggle and throw the pieces to one another. The activity turns chaotic and the two boys take everything they can from the two families and exit, leaving the two mothers praying and asking God for assistance. In the final few moments, the police arrive, but we are surprised to find out that the police are played by the same actors who played the two urbanized southern boys. According to Stephen Ochalla, a common refrain among southerners in Khartoum is that the police are not police, but "shamasha" – an Arabic term meaning "children of the sun" but in this context referring to street children and thugs, a stock character in Kwoto's theater who shows up in this play as the robbers (Personal Interview). To have the same actors who play the shamasha play the police is to make visible popular opinion on the seamlessness between "criminality" and "government." What is most interesting is that the corrupt

government officials are not northerners here, but rather southerners who have betrayed their southern inheritance and have partially assimilated to the north.

The improvisation ends with the "police" / "shamasha" asking the families for their names, their addresses, their identification card, and with the families at the mercy of the corrupt law enforcement officials due to their illiteracy in Arabic. To every question, the woman answers "Haj Yousif" until the sound of drums leads the police/shamasha characters to drag the women off-stage.

Haj Yousif has a didactic aim, but the messages may be multiple. First, the play communicates and warns about the importance of literacy and "paper" in the bureaucracy of Khartoum. There is not only the potential for stolen or sequestered documents by authorities; there is also the intuited connection between paperwork and literacy to state authority and power. Sharon Hutchinson described rural Nuer feelings about the growing centrality of "paper" in their regions in the 1980s:

> And because the vast majority of contemporary Nuer men and women remained totally uninitiated into the mysteries of "writing," "paper" was becoming an increasingly powerful – if not 'fetishized' – symbol of their simultaneous dependence on and estrangement from the powers of government. (Nuer 281)

An NGO report more recently affirms this view: "In the rural environment literacy was not a necessary life-skill, but in the city it is recognized as crucial. Those who are not educated feel vulnerable and excluded" (Loveless 36).

The ID in the play becomes the first entryway into the landscape of the city, and blocks the families from finding Haj Yousif. The ID would also presumably authenticate the characters' identities as urban residents, and thus national citizens. "Documentation Needs" for IDPs is given its own section in a report undertaken by the Forced Migration

and Refugee Studies Programme at the American University of Cairo; the report cites 36% of all IDPs in Khartoum in 2002 as having no documentation impacting their claims to the benefits of citizenship (Bekker 132). Facing the representatives of the law, the southern migrants are responsible for "proving" their citizenship. The introduction of paperwork documenting citizenship in terms of ethnicity began during the colonial era as explained by Idris:

> [D]efining citizenship in terms of membership in ethnic groups living within the territorial boundaries established for the Anglo-Egyptian rule in 1898. This colonially created law of citizenship invented the category of 'foreigners' or aliens in Sudan. Thus, being born in the Sudan, even to parents born there, did not entitle a person to citizenship in the absence of proper 'ethnic identification.' (*Conflict* 95)

British officials instituted a program where people were identified by "tribal" affiliation. Certain dominant riverain groups were further recognized as "Arab" as opposed to "sudani" (ex-slave) or "southerner." Post-independence governments continued the Identification requirements and O'Brien notes that it often became "sufficient to be acknowledged as a member of an Arab tribe to be accorded the rights and privileges of citizenship" (qtd. in Idris *Conflict* 96). The question of citizenship raises the issue of the ambivalent reception southerners have historically met in Khartoum: although needed as slaves and wage labor in construction, they have also been perceived as "inauthentic" Sudanese, tainted by their indigenous religious beliefs, colonialism and missionaries (Hutchinson Nuer 69; Jok *War* 108 – 111). In the 1970s, increasing crime rates in Khartoum were blamed on incoming southern migrants (Jok *War* 109), and in the 1970s and 80s, southerners were discouraged from moving into the Three Towns area (Hale, G. 2003; Jok 109 – 110). One tactic used by the Nimeiri regime was to bulldoze selected

shantytowns (Hale, G. 2003), another was the policy called *kasha,* or forced expulsions, from the Arabic word meaning to disperse, scatter, break up, send away, dismiss, drive away, chase away (Jok *War* 110; Wehr 848). As described by anthropologist Jok Madut Jok, kasha refers to:

> [a] practice that the Nimeiri government introduced to cleanse the capital city of all the undocumented rural migrants, mainly from the South and the Nuba Mountains. Such people were to be captured and repatriated to their home regions. They were usually rounded up and packed into lorries and trains headed South. [B]ut the practice was so arbitrary that the police did not distinguish among the student, the laborer who had a job, and the 'redundant.' The only criteria for arrests were physical appearance, especially complexion, attire, and Arabic language skills or accent. If one was black and did not speak proper Arabic, he was the perfect candidate for forced repatriation. (Jok *War* 110 – 111)

Without an ID to "authenticate" identity, and without the Arabic language skills that confer citizenship, the southerner is in danger of being moved on command. In the play, the feminized southerner has no documentation, and as a result appears devoid of agency, and controlled by abstract powers.

Another message of the play mediates between the audience and the characters. For although the illiteracy in Arabic is the primary source of the families' victimization, it is their division on stage that adds to their vulnerability. If the families give up their solitary identification to one ethnicity and language, and use Juba Arabic, they might communicate with one another and arrive at a solution that will protect them from the predations of the urbanized shamasha and the police. Told in the context of Khartoum, the play seems to refrain from preaching a complete return to a rural identity, and so opens a space for the creation of an alternative urban identity that is "southern" rather than assimilated, since, according to the play *Haj Yousif,* to be assimilated it to be

associated with greed and power. The displaced southerner must navigate an intermediate position between the feminized rural southern subject and the masculinized urbanized corrupt assimilated southerner epitomized by the police and shamasha. The play does not offer a blueprint for how to navigate such a path, but the stage offers a platform for the rehearsal of contingent, and therefore changeable, identities. As we will see in the next play, though, the path is fraught with danger, and even the home is not safe from the corrupting effects of Khartoum.

There's No Place like Home: Intoxicating Men in al-Hoosh (The Courtyard)

The play *al-Hoosh* (The Courtyard) was written by Stephen Affear Ochalla during summer 2001 and is semi-improvised when performed (Personal Interview). The debut of al-Hoosh was at the *Masra al-Qawmi* (National Theater) in Omdurman, and they also performed it at Comboni Ground in Khartoum for Kwoto's 8th anniversary (see Figure 13). I watched four versions of the play during the summer of 2002 when Kwoto performed Al-Hoosh for several different audiences in Haj Yousif Shigla and Haj Yousif Wahda in June 2002 and videotaped these performances. Like *Haj Yousif, Al-Hoosh* treats themes related to social change and urbanization; this time, the central subject is overcrowding and substandard housing in Khartoum among the displaced. During an interview, I asked the director, Ochalla, to talk about this play and he responded with the following thoughts:

> *Al-Hoosh* is very popular with our audiences. There are a lot of people who understand what we want to say in al-Hoosh. There are a lot of different families in one Hoosh. This message of al-Hoosh is clear for our people – especially for the displaced people. Housing is an issue here in Khartoum. It is very difficult for us here. In the past, in South Sudan, everybody had their own house. Here, no one

> family can live alone – it is too expensive, and the way the housing is set up, we cannot do that. So, now sometimes you can have many families – maybe six families – different tribes, different temperaments, different systems, all living together. This is a new culture for us. To see somebody staying with you – sharing your water, your toilet, sometimes someone may even need to share your bed. (Personal Interview)

Al-Hoosh certainly addresses the problems of housing and overcrowding in Khartoum; that very issue provides the framework for the situation on stage. But the play points to a number of other dilemmas faced by the displaced in the urban environment; I suggest these dilemmas are dramatized through the depiction of fractured kinship structures and the inversion of masculine authority. A newly displaced young male displays a new code of ethics consonant with the urban milieu, while the elder is consumed with alcohol and longings for unrealized power. As in *Haj Yousif,* the urbanized southerners are portrayed as untrustworthy, selfish and corrupt, but this time they are inside the hoosh, or domestic space rather than outside on the street. Many characters move on and off the stage, but in my reading I highlight the drunk elder as the epitome of the perversion of traditional structures of obligation and reciprocity.

The courtyard of a Sudanese house is where all the action takes place. A typical home consists of a number of individual rooms encircled by a courtyard and a large wall, or fence, that then encircles the courtyard from public view and the street. The "hoosh" may be translated then, as "fence" in the sense that it refers to the wall separating the home's courtyard from the street, or as "courtyard" to refer to the space utilized by family members.[24] Kwoto's play al-Hoosh may be translated as either *The Fence,* or *The Courtyard,* and I have chosen *The Courtyard* to emphasize the activity that takes place in this sphere.[25] Preparations for festivities or festivities proper may take place here, all

domestic labor including laundry, everyday visiting and conversing, and sleep. A typical Sudanese home might have a couple of private rooms complete with walls and a thatched, mud, or metal roof, but those rooms are utilized only to store goods, to sleep in times of inclement weather or for privacy's sake. Otherwise, people are out in al-hoosh, enjoying the open air and sun.

The spatial dynamic of a hoosh challenges the public/private divide; it is partially enclosed from public view, but allows for communal gathering among members of the extended family and is the first space an outsider encounters when she goes through the entryway of a house.[26] Although residents of a house may sleep in a private room, it is more common for members of the household to carry their beds outside during the evening and sleep in the hoosh. The semi-public nature of this sphere makes it a natural one to dramatize on stage. *Al-Hoosh* opens with a young man looking like he is moving into a newly rented house. He wanders into the performance space, Stevie Wonder singing in the background.[27] Behind him, in the back of the performance area but still visible to the audience, are the rest of the cast members, lying face-down on the ground. The main character carries with him the items that will surround him throughout the play: an *angareb,* or Sudanese rope bed, a *tisht,* or aluminum laundry pan, a plate. A large water jug stands near his bed. As the music fades, and the audience settles into their seats, the play begins.

The main character is a newly arrived student from the south. He is reserved, unattached to any relatives or friends, stays to himself, and is silent for the entire play until the very end. The first person to enter the scene after the main character has settled

down is the water carrier, a ubiquitous figure in most of the shantytowns and some of the displaced areas. Wearing a *jellabiyya* signifying Muslim and northern identity, the actor rushes in through the audience as fast as he can with the weight he is carrying, and chatters on about how busy he is and how he must rush to all the other appointments he has with people who have contracts with him to deliver their water (see Figure #). According to one NGO report, water provision in the shantytowns is even less satisfactory than in the displaced camps, and most residents must pay exorbitant prices for private delivery by donkey cart (Loveless 58). The main character, looking rather befuddled, pays the water carrier and tries to settle back down. He is interrupted almost immediately by a young woman who rushes in babbling on about her research project. She sits next to him on his bed and explains that she is doing research; moving ever closer to him, and without even a pause for a breath, she asks the stranger if he'll be her research subject. The whole time, the man inches away from her, trying to escape her cowering presence. She, in turn, continues to move closer to him, insisting that he help her and claiming that she will do *eeyi haaja* (anything) for him, "anything." Within a couple of minutes, he falls off the bed, and she takes her leave, still babbling on about her project.

After she leaves, three shamasha (thugs, street boys, market squatters) enter, steal the main character's large round laundry pan and a small dinner plate, and proceed to fight over the pan, pulling at it from three sides. All the while, each yells that he, indeed, is the strongest of them and will win. The costuming of the young shamasha that mark them as street dwellers include loose fitting, ripped and disheveled clothing, and knit

hats. All the while this is going on, the newly arrived man, who, by now, the audience suspects is newly displaced, looks on with utter confusion.

A series of neighbors, all sharing the same hoosh, continue to dribble in. A boy, who speaks with a nasally tone and behaves as if he is mentally-challenged, searches for a dinner plate, and looks under the main character's bed. After he doesn't find it, he leaves. A few moments later, two women storm in, yelling at the main character for sending the boy over to "steal their plates." One of these women says loudly that just because her husband works for the United Nations does not mean their house is set up for handouts. Wearing a nightgown padded around the stomach, she stomps around the stage, waving a pan in the air, and screams that she can take on any man. The main character, looking bewildered, apologizes.

Next, an older man staggers in, takes a drink from the water jug, and seeks the main character's attention. He tells him that he "has a nice pot" referring to the water jug, a statement that would otherwise seem ridiculous unless we understand that the man is drunk. The drunk man, who we also understand is the husband who purportedly works for the UN, continues to flatter the newcomer, even as he steals his water and makes himself comfortable on his bed. Conversation quickly turns to marital status, and the drunk boasts of his six wives, and important status in the community. He insists that he is well-known everywhere, even abroad. Each of the men eventually falls asleep, the drunk man on the bed, the main character on the floor, at which point the mentally-challenged boy enters and rips all of the clothes off the clotheslines, saying, "this is not my mother's," leaving piles on the ground.

At dawn, before the main character has a chance to wake up, the neighbors see the mess, and begin to yell at him for pulling all the clothes off the line. He tries to resist this onslaught, but the entire cast gangs up on him, telling him that he must now wash all of the clothes himself. Burdened by this task, but determined to finish it, the main character sits center stage with the laundry pan and labors at cleaning the clothes. The man sits all day, and all night, at which time he lights his lantern with a match. Each of the neighbors in turn comes and steals his lit lantern and replaces it with an unlit one when he isn't paying attention. Frustrated and tired, he continues washing the clothes until the drunk man wakes up and makes a fuss about not having any water. He accuses the main character for this oversight and begins to berate him for "weak" ways. The drunk man suggests that the main character is not a real man, and that he would not be washing other people's clothes, especially women's clothes, if he were a real man. The drunk man holds himself up as the model of what a real man is, and cautions the main character that he must stand up to the neighbors and to exert his power or else be overwhelmed by the woes of life.

Fired up and provoked, the main character gets very angry and starts yelling loudly that it was he who rented the room, and that the space belongs to him. He rushes around madly, retrieving his items from his neighbors, including an iron, luggage, a plate, and some clothes, all the while screaming that all of the belongings are his and that the people around him are hyprocrites who own nothing. The play ends with the main character accusing his neighbors of lying, pretension and hypocrisy.

This play, like most others that are performed in the displaced areas, was performed within one of the structures in a church parish; some of the structures had thatched or metal roofs and the ground in the front of the room served as the performance area. Members transformed the space into a stage by hanging cloth from beams or wooden poles, laying colorful fabric on the ground and carefully placing the few props and hanging the microphones so they dangle over the stage. The directors set up a sound system, which Ochalla told me was one of the first items they listed as absolutely crucial when they first applied for funding to set up shows for displaced audiences which can easily reach two hundred people (Personal Interview). Clearly influenced by Western theater formats, the audience sat in straight rows of metal folding chairs and watched the action in front of them. There is no curtain and when the actors are "off-stage" they lay on fabric spread out in the back of the performance area, directly behind the action and for all to see. Like the improvisation Haj Yousif, Al-Hoosh relies on stock characters and physical comedy: among the men, there are the shamasha and al-azaba (bachelors) – all single urbanized men – who taunt one another and boast of their strength and criminal activity; there is the mentally-challenged young man who repeats sentences and states the obvious; and there is the drunk elder who brags about the things he owns and the stature he has achieved. The shamasha and azaba continually fistfight and try to demonstrate their superior strength; the mentally-challenged young man flits in and out holding a rose, putting his hands in places they do not belong and making mischief wherever he goes; the alcoholic elder stumbles and falls face-forward into bed just when he is finished naming his six wives.

The words and the actions of these men contradict one another and reveal the cracks and gaps in people's social identities. The elder wears dirty and ripped clothing and appears wild and unkempt, with bulging eyes; thus his claim to be a representative of the UN appears all the more preposterous. The contradictions on stage reveal the hypocrisy of status-seeking and so show status-seeking and status-bearing to be types of performances. On the other hand, the young man's quiet, unassuming manner and behavior (he pays the water carrier, for example), appears model. The elder appears feeble and foolish in the face of the new economy that rewards the ambitions of a young female student who wears Western-style flowered dresses and will do "anything" to succeed. As Abusharaf notes, the "most severe impact of war on southerners manifested itself in the eroding of lineage and family structures" (54), but importantly, the erosion also allows for juniors and other subaltern members to benefit and move into positions that would otherwise be unavailable to them in the traditional system. Davidson notes that young Nuba entrepreneurs quickly tire of what they consider to be the elders' "unproductive uses of cattle and bridewealth" and after having gained access to education and other resources, "transcend the confines of the village and the ensuing obligations imposed by the older organizational principles" (125 – 126). Outside of the hoosh the elder's power is diminished, while inside the hoosh, he boasts of his exploits, telling tales of his wives and his position within esteemed international organizations. As Davidson notes:

> Elders [ ] consider the seemingly authoritarian prescriptions advanced by government administrators as insulting to their dignity and threatening to their authority. And, while the continuity of lineage relations guarantees a voice for the elders, it is increasingly limited to the realm of their extended families. (125)

"Limited" to the realm of the extended family and hoosh, the drunken man in the play magnifies his authority, becoming ever more authoritarian himself. Rejecting "womanly" work such as laundry and washing dishes, the elder warns the young man of becoming "like a girl" (kama bint).

The man's public manifestation of drunkenness is "intimately linked to questions of gender and urban adaptation" as shown by Guro Huby's study of drinking patterns among urbanizing Bari in Sudan. Huby makes the important point that drinking is only considered a "problem" among the Bari if it threatens a marriage or undermines kinship and lineage ties perceived as central to a person's definition of selfhood, and that this most often occurs among middle-aged men whose growing and competing financial obligations cannot be met (246). In other words, although elders will drink, it is rare that violence is introduced into the picture because they are not under the same personal and social stresses as their juniors. Brewing and distilling of alcohol has always been women's work in southern Sudan. In towns, husbands provide their wives with a sack of grain per month from which she will brew beer and supplement the husbands' wages (242). With the diminution of the value of land and so men's wealth, women's activities such as brewing took on new importance as a source of cash income. In Khartoum, the brewing of alcohol has become an occupation routinely filled by southern Sudanese women because of and despite its illegality under shari'a law (Loveless 46), the subject of a number of Kwoto plays (Appendix B). The sudden importance of women's work outside the home introduced a paradox in gender relations as suddenly women's higher earning power clashed with her subservient role in the household; just as younger men's

access to state employment and education put them in competition with the customary authority of elder males. Huby suggests that the show of intoxication may be used by men as a means to change the boundaries of social interaction, allowing the drinker to set the terms of an encounter and display his authority (244). That is, in the case of the play, intoxication becomes a mode of patriarchal re-assertion where that authority is in reality an illusion. Customarily, a wife could turn to the lineage elders to complain about her husband's inability to manage the household. If it was determined that alcohol was the reason for his failure to meet his obligations, a ceremony would be put into effect to reintegrate him and reorient him toward investing in the kinship structure (246 – 247). Furthermore, it is well-known that southern customs allow for multiple wives, whereas Islam limits the number to four. He speaks repeatedly of his six wives – the traditional symbol of wealth in a polgynous southern society – but only one materializes and when she speaks it is to make analogies between her power and that of a male. She supports her husband's delusions in "working for the UN" and participates in his performances of grandeur. With severe constraints on income and wealth, southern men find it more difficult to support multiple wives and socio-economic conditions and such diverse voices as non-governmental organizations, churches and NGOs are influencing popular opinion to move towards a nuclear family model. In this context, the elder's boast of having six wives is a fantasy of wealth and power that exists outside the urban market economy. It is also an admission of dependence on kinship and "non-market" ties during particularly strenuous times (Bernal 57). By repeatedly citing his involvement in the "U.N.," the elder also attests to his integration into the social life of modernity,

"organized to a significant extent by people, institutions, and processes based outside the kin group and immediate community" (Bernal 39).

A traditional Dinka folktale about addiction adds a further layer to consider in our interpretation of Al-Hoosh. In the story "Kir and Ken and Their Addicted Father," the father's addiction to tobacco and his willingness to sell his sons for the plant not only undermines his status as an elder and his role as a father, but also authorizes his sons to kill him (Deng *Dinka Folktales* 91 – 93). Similarly, in Al-Hoosh, the elder's behavior undermines any authority he may have and opens the way for the young man to become the voice of reason and truth.

It is up for debate whether the play depicts al-hoosh as an irreparable space – full of disconnected individuals without the possibility of any thread weaving them together – or whether there is space to imagine the newly arrived southern male student as a connective and moral agent. In a column in *Al Ayyam* in September 2001, Gabriel Hillary Malek reviewed Al Hoosh and said that its content "explores whether the oppressed person can overcome the sorrow he encounters and urge others to depend on themselves and bring out their hidden potentials" ("Utilizing" 8). The newly arrived migrant, depicted as kinless, is a possible avenue for unity, but the unresolved question of "unity" is seen in this play to depend also on self-reliance. What is being promoted in Al-Hoosh? Is the play suggesting that the structure of a failed kinship should be replaced or at least paralled by a rationalized system of cash exchange and contracts? Should the dream of a polygynous arrangement be replaced by the nuclear model or by university study and no family at all?

The next play does not answer these questions, but explores further the changing definitions and ideologies of family in the urban setting. Again, the figure of the urbanized male youth, as an embodiment of what Khartoum can do, represents the fragmentation and individualization occurring within the southern family.

Warnish (Shoe Shine Play): The Subaltern Streets

Kwoto's play *Warnish,* written by Stephen Affear Ochalla, treats the emergence of large groups of apparently kinless boys and girls in Khartoum, children known as "shamasha" (children of the sun; thugs) by the public. It is written in colloquial Sudanese and Juba Arabic and is eight pages long with short, pithy, fast-paced dialogue and a regular address by a four-person Chorus who double as the lead actors. It stages the fantasies of street boys who attempt to imagine alternative kinship ties among themselves in a city where they are ousted and demonized by southerners and northerners. While the northerners scapegoat the boys for everything from rising crime rates and general chaos of a booming Khartoum, some southerners fear the boys' disconnection and radical individuality as a threat to communal notions of proper southern nationalism. From the southern perspective depicted in the play, the boys' disconnection from community, and even more importantly, History, personified in parts of the play, makes them vulnerable to assimilation into northern society, an undesirable fate. In the play, the shamasha work as shoe shiners, and the very act of varnishing a shoe, shining a commodity, becomes a metaphor for the erasure of history and memory, and the production of the unattached individual. At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, the act of varnishing as ritual

creates a sense of communal identity and substitute kinship among the boys. The boys in *Warnish* dramatize the anxieties and ambivalence around the entrepreneurial spirit encouraged by the market economy that leads to individual success but downplays the family, diminishes the importance of the inheritance of memory, monetizes lineal obligations and commodifies every exchange. The style and content of the dialogue is fragmented, reflecting the fragmented attachments of the youth and the dizzying array of consumptive practices that inform their identities.

Perhaps the ultimate kinless figure is the orphan and street child. As we saw with Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North,* even the mere ascription of illegitimacy in northern Sudanese Muslim communities can be a powerful means to stigmatize an individual. Too, in customary southern communities, the identity of "orphan" can be catastrophic. For the Dinka, "illegitimacy in the Western sense does not exist" according to Deng (*The Dinka and Their Songs* 23), in that every child is integrated into the community and taken care of, even if he never partakes in the privileges of biological and legal paternity. Especially since the second civil war, it is no longer possible to claim that illegitimacy and orphanhood do not exist in Sudan. First, men and women may die in war, leaving their children parentless. But, also, as Jok Madut Jok explains, the militarization of Dinka culture during the second civil war has completely transformed former procreative behavior and rules. In wartime, according to these new ideologies, the procreative act is part of the national effort, thereby loosening it from the extended family and from any responsibility and accountability on the part of the male soldier ("Militarization" 430). These processes create the conditions for increasing numbers of

illegitimate children. However, what I am calling "kinless" children are not only the product of the warfront; they are also a product of the socio-economic conditions of displacement. Awad says that the flow of internal migrants into Khartoum in the 1980s resulted in the emergence of this new subculture, and many of them are the offspring of recent migrants from the areas affected by war such as the south (Awad 2). Changing marriage and family patterns in Khartoum mean that there are more "kinless" children (Loveless 30 – 32). Furthermore, household conflict and stress and economic pressures and opportunities have led to increasing numbers of youth leaving home temporarily or permanently (Awad 1 – 19). "Street children" is not a homogenous category and represents a range of dependence on and independence from the familial unit (Loveless 30 – 32). Although both boys and girls can be found on the street, they tend to stratify along gender lines. Based on her fieldwork in the displaced camp Takamul, Rogaia Abusharaf writes, "While many girls are employed as maids, southern boys find it difficult to find work. They are stigmatized and feared, called *shamasa* and are largely left alone" (69). For many of these shamasha, the only work they can find is as shoe shiners (Loveless 42). Structured by multiple binaries, including northern/southern, elite/poor, and adult/children, street children represent a multiply subaltern positioning. However, it is not adequate to say that the play *Warnish* articulates the voices or identities of subaltern street children, rather, the play is a space where Kwoto members and directors negotiate the tensions among their competing identifications to and with the "shamasha."

"Warnish" refers to the call street boys make when they are working as shoe shiners in the streets of Khartoum. During the play four boys congregate on stage and while they are waiting for clients, they role-play and act out fantasy scenes. The boys are not given names in the script, but rather are called *Masih,* or Shoe Cleaner 1, 2, 3, and 4. They wear the ripped and loose clothing of the shamasha as in both *Haj Yousif* and *Al Hoosh*, topped with knit caps and rasta hats. Throughout the play, they show their multiple and cosmopolitan identifications through their modes of consumption; their citations are numerous and diverse: Italian shoe brands, Hindi movie plots, Japanese cars, Arabic name-calling and English words peppered throughout.

The play employs more ritual aspects than either *Haj Yousif* or *Al-Hoosh.* For example, the play includes a Chorus (cited as *jamiah or majmoua*), comprised of the four Shoe Shiners, who punctuate the scenes periodically by speaking in unison. When the first speaker spouts a made-up proverb, dressing it up by articulating perfect *Fusha*: "The eye of the shoe is better than the feet," immediately, all of the other Cleaners respond in unison: "You mean Varnish *(yanni al warnish),* distinguishing their occupation (what good is a shoe without a shining) and themselves by emphasizing the colloquial. When a young woman brings her slippers to be repaired, the Chorus muses: "Peeling apart is better than broken," evoking the broken family ties these boys represent. The Choral mode is repeated throughout the play, a technique not apparent in either of the previous plays, and a strategy that emphasizes the collectivity these boys have created for themselves. It is used for a variety of purposes: to respond to a question, to insult, to confirm. At one point, one boy declares, "O People, the Shoe Shiners have their opinion"

with the Chorus responding, "Yes, we have an opinion," whereby another boy responds "What is your opinion: do you think the Shoe Shiners are only cream, brush, handkerchief?" At another time, the boys insult one other by commanding in colloquial: "Walk dusty like this" (*amshi magba kida).*[28] "When I asked Ochalla about his use of a Chorus, he emphasized the idea of "unity" and "harmony" as aesthetic and social principles. He noted that from the perspective of the audience and of outsiders, the boys are asocial, but taking an internal perspective, one must acknowledge the harmony they produce for themselves. According to reports on street children in Khartoum, they develop tight mutual-support groups with their own insular language, their own rules and hierarchies, some of which are reproduced from their home cultures (Loveless 31). Significantly, the shamasha culture of the street is multi-ethnic, with self-styled gangs including youth from Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Nuba and Acholi backgrounds (Loveless 32). Still, for one Kwoto director, the "harmony" the street boys produce is in the end an illusion since they are stuck in a world of what he called "trivial" work and oppressive conditions.

The worlds the boys create for themselves in *Warnish* are for the most part depicted through role-play. The role-plays in the play tend to demonstrate the tightness of the bond between the boys, and invert social relationships and clear the space for the Shoe Shiners to critique dominant figures of authority and power and boast about their own freedom, creativity and resourcefulness. There is a tension here between the personal distinctiveness of each Masih and the bonds of brotherhood they continually assert through the Chorus. The first role-play dramatizes an everyday encounter – that of the

Client asking for a shoe shine. One Cleaner acting as a Client steps up and commands: "aaahem, aahem, Shine this shoe!" Another asks, "Employee?" *(Mwathaf?).* When the first boy answers "yes" (*Aiwa!*), he is turned away with "Sorry, brother" (*Sorry, leka al akhi*) and told that they will only shine the shoes of business people or traders. This leads to banter about what brand of shoe each boy will shine, the throwing out of terms in Italian, and the insistence that they be paid for what they do. Claiming that they "are smart" even though "people" think they are ignorant, the boys turn to acting out the roles of a Hindi action movie hero, fabricating a few words in Hindi, pretending to secure payment due for a Shoe Shine job in what one of the boys calls a "lawless country" *(al balad mafihim qanoon).* However, almost immediately after they declare victory, they relegate themselves to the role of villains in the eyes of those in the north. In dramatizing themselves as scapegoats, they imagine a series of disasters, including a worried man falling into a Canal; a plane crash caused by a dust storm (haboob) and in each case jokingly find themselves to be the cause.

Throughout the play, the boys play with the structures of the bourgeois world represented most powerfully by women and History. Illustrating their experimentation with, critique of and rejection of "bourgeois" lifestyles, the boys conscript the girl into a role-play based on marriage which turns into a pained devolution into socio-economic hardship and the pressures on the displaced family. When she first arrives, the boys speak dismissively of the girl's dedication to school, stating in question form, "You are a student, only?" At first she protests their jibes and treatment of her, but when they take her slippers hostage, she is coerced into staying, and enters the realm of the Warnish. In

the next scene – marked as "a week later" she is comfortably ensconced and swears to God that she loves it there, citing their openness and humbleness as the attraction. When one boy declares he would like to tell her a story, the Chorus announces a wedding, and at the count of three, the two are wed and she becomes part of the role-play. According to Kwoto director Elfatih Atem, the girl is coming from a restrictive family and finds freedom in the streets and with the boys. This possibility is attested to by Salwa Awad's paper on shamasha where, she notes, "a fantasy of freedom and excitement in the city may attract children away from homes" (2). The gendered components of this insight come to the fore in the play, since the girl comes to represent respectable and modest attachments against their own unlimited affiliations and grandiosity.

The girl's respectable attachments are associated with upward mobility both denied to and rejected by the boys. When the paradisiacal aspects of the girl's visit and role-play come to a halt, the "husband" and "wife" bicker over money for lunches, care-taking of children, and show of affection, when eventually the young woman requests to have her slippers back and asks for a divorce. The Shoe Shiner grants a divorce and he and the Chorus announce dejectedly that their attempt to "Varnish" her conscience did not work. In response, the girl turns to calling the boys "Masakiin" or "poor" for their limited knowledge of the world, and insisting she knows the right way to use her cultural inheritance, asking *"ghata ween?"* or "Where is the wrong?" with returning to her former life.

Upon her rejection, the boys utilize further ritualized aspects to assert the history of the loss of their genealogy and identity, and to come up with an answer to "Where is

the wrong?" First, they amusingly turn the search for the wrong into a real scavenger hunt, looking for "the wrong" in every corner of stage. Next, their search transforms into a quest to tell History, capitalized both to show its appearance as a personification in the play and to clarify its signification as the dominant model of history which the boys burden under. In the play, Masih 1 becomes the personification of History and in a short amount of time, leads his followers from a idealized precolonial setting through to a time when there is no History. Of the precolonial times, the Shoe Shiner says:

> M1: (as History) O my dear sons, they were strong people. Their hearts were hot. Their eyes big as the mountains. They fought for years. Good people.
> M3: You give them textiles, they give you salt
> M4: You come to them hungry, they feed you. And they give you a piece of land

But soon after this dialogue, History cannot remember what comes next, and repeats his praise for the "good-hearted" over and over again. He turns to *araki* (local alcohol) to both ease his discomfort and ease the way forward, taking the audience into yet another ritualized realm within the play. As I noted in my reading of *Al Hoosh* above, the brewing and distilling of alcohol is primarily the job of southern Sudanese women. In the north of Sudan, the brewing of araki became associated with those of slave and ex-slave descent and in the contemporary period with migrant southerners. In his accounts of the *zar tumbura* ritual among slave descendants in the north, Makris notes the widespread consumption of *araki* in both ritual and everyday settings (*Changing* 85, 111, 117, 183, 349, 378, 381). Furthering this movement into a liminal realm of intoxication, and possibly possession, History responds to a question about his source of piety with the answer: "See the *jinn*; they are (as) shamasha" (*shouf jinni, kashamasha*), and blames

them for the drinking of alcohol. The reference to the jinn as "shamasha" builds on older practices of zar bore and zar tumbura described earlier where new "characters" (*shakhs*) enter the spirit repertoire as socio-economic formations alter. As earlier generations of northern Sudanese incorporated spirits referring to Turkish military officials, Ethiopians, and southern Sudanese, in this play the shamasha enact a theatricalized version of the ritual, where either the shamasha become a new order of jinn, or all jinn are turned into "shamasha." The play's invocation of the zar ritual is evocative since the shamasha's liminal existence is strongly reminiscent of the equally liminal realm of the sudani, the ex-slaves who partially assimilated into the north from the Ottoman era onward, and are the main practitioners of zar tumbura.

After the encounter with the "jinn," History throws the bottles of araki on the ground in front of his fellow Shoe Shiners and they grow increasingly agitated that they cannot access the past. As a group, they declare: "The face of our dangerous history," and "the truth of the homeless, who know no mother nor father nor country," and "Varnish the History." The play ends with a warning to the girl: "You will never find a substitute to the Varnish. Nothing there except a lot of dust. Nothing. Varnish."

A central concern of *Warnish* is the disconnection of the shamasha from their history. As a piece of TfD, the play aims to communicate the rights of the child and the need for education as a means of self-betterment (Ochalla Personal Interview; Appendix B). But how does the world of the shamasha as depicted in this play represent the social imaginary? Theirs is shown to be a world with no center and precisely because of that, it is a fast-paced world full of excitement and stimulation but also unstable, inconsistent

and transient. The world they occupy has no norms by which to live, which they celebrate by seizing the freedom to select sides, shift loyalties, taste, desires, consumptive habits and affiliations.

The director's reading of the play emphasizes the tragedy of the shamasha and the need to bring them back into the fold of southern cultures. According to exchanges I had with Ochalla as well as with Elfatih Atem, we are not supposed to identify with the shamasha, although we may empathize or pity them. Some members of Kwoto's audiences might agree with this interpretation. For example, a twenty-nine year old southern male who worked at a travel agency and had seen Kwoto many times since 1996 said:

> Kwoto is facing a very difficult problem. Some generations are born here in Khartoum and do not know their cultures and if Kwoto doesn't work hard, it will lose this generation or this generation will be attracted by the dominant culture. (Personal Interview)

This Dinka student was born in Omdurman, but did not include himself in the category of the assimilated, saying he did not consider Khartoum home, and could still remember his grandparents' house in Abieh. Still, he said that he sometimes went to Kwoto shows because it made him "remember and live his reality and cultures." This interviewee among others expressed a sense of loss related to the processes of urbanization and assimilation that are depicted through the prism of the shamasha / Shoe Shiners. Furthermore, many reports have been issued that document the harassment of street children in Khartoum, including sexual harassment by police and forced Islamization in "camps" and reformatories (Awad 1 – 19; Loveless 31 – 34). But if we distance ourselves from the director's interpretation for a moment, we may note that for many of

the southern Sudanese, the shamasha as depicted in this play appear to occupy an intermediate realm that is marked as undesirable not only because of the material poverty associated with the station, but because of the shamasha's relation to discourses of history, genealogy and descent that is also central to the ex-slave. The shamasha have no history; they are kinless and as such, dangerous. As I noted in the Introduction, the penetration of the cash economy laid the groundwork for younger men to prosper and potentially divert wealth away from their lineages (Huby 241). Furthermore, the kinless serve as an apt metaphor for the loneliness of the city and the loss of primary social relations; that is, every city dweller is an "orphan."

The writer and director of the play utilize several theatrical strategies to depict the space of fragmentation and genealogical isolation that is part of the world of the *Warnish,* including quick changes between scenes, role-playing, use of "fake" proverbs and pithy statements, inclusion of terms from English, Dinka, made-up Hindi, Italian, the personification of History and the very brief gesture to zar rituals and intoxication as a means to alter one's relationship to dominant definitions of reality.

The next play also incorporates ritual, but this time, it is in reference to history and the definition of family is extended to include the ancestors and foreigners with whom theater members endeavor to build attachments.

Marhoum Alif (The Deceased X): Calling Outsiders and Ancestors

The play *Marhoum Alif* self-consciously points to the historicity of southern loss of lives in Sudan, and ties the loss of lands and property in the second civil war to early Ottoman invasions in the south. Here, I suggest that the displaced southerners point to their prior

histories as slaves and soldiers in the north and actively appropriate that history as a form of public memory. I further suggest that in this production, Kwoto appropriates powerful ancestor rituals observed by many southern communities, and by decontextualizing and secularizing these rituals, employs them as a mechanism for unity and survival in the urban north. By having the actors inhabit the bodies of the "deceased" who occupy another realm, Kwoto allegorizes the condition of displacement and comments critically on the disarticulation of the south and southerners from the global community.

The following are the stage directions for *Marhoum Alif:*[29]

> Low whispers gradually louder with the appearance of a group of actors holding candles. Under one of the burned trees, graves and coffins scattered, and over each grave an old hat placed over the tombstone. The actors carry the candles around the graves; then the candle light weakens and a group of Deceased appear in their graves talking to each other. Suddenly, they hear a sound of shaking; the graves are shaking and the sound seems like an earthquake or an explosion from far away… A land engineer enters… measuring the land space and all of the Deceased hold up white flags

In *Marhoum Alif*, Kwoto directors employ a more complex set design and rely on ritual and spectacle more thoroughly than in the plays previously discussed in this chapter. *Marhoum Alif* is part of Kwoto's repertoire, but is not performed regularly. It is one of the shows saved for special occasions, such as Kwoto's three-day Anniversary show held annually in the large outdoor arena Comboni Ground. I was not in Khartoum for the Anniversary Show, but I was given a videotape of the performance of *Marhoum Alif* that is part of my archive for this project; all of the analysis and observations of the performance are based on this tape and follow-up conversations with Kwoto directors.

As performed at Comboni Playground, *Marhoum Alif* occurs on a stage covered with constructed sets, such as wooden coffins on wheels, painted pink and with a hinged

top; painted tombstones, burnt trees; Ottoman era military helmets; an auction stand that also serves to symbolize a court (Figure 14). Actors play the deceased, but also disperse and take on other roles in otherworldly vignettes, such as a surveying (and also dead) engineer, a woman giving birth, men praying, men milking cows, a female witch and a kujur, an elder, a policeman. There are enactments of various rituals, voicing of laments and wailing, performance of prayer.

Marhoum Alif is not organized around a linear plot line; it is more accurately described as a ritual, and emphasizes repetition and cyclicality. The scenes do not adhere to the conventions of realism and instead transgress time and space in their portrayal of the problems and positions of the Deceased. The play is framed by the explosion indicated by the drumming and the arrival of an Engineer to a plot of land serving as a burial ground (see Figure 16). He is perched at an auction table, holding a measuring tape and surveying the land, apparently trying to purchase it after finding out it is rich in resources. Here, in other words, is the "landing of the expert… in charge of investigating, measuring, and theorizing about this or that [aspect of society]" (Escobar 19). The science of measuring and measurement comprise the task and vocation of the Engineer, who is a figure of modernity and a representative figure of the intellectual in Arabic literature (Baradi *Shakhs*; Berman *Impossible*). All the characters on stage are dead and buried in the same land. They resist the Engineer wholeheartedly, chanting "it is our land, it is our earth; these are our graves."

The earthquake opening the play, the figure of the Engineer and the helicopter sounds that punctuate various scenes, all point toward the probability that Marhoum Alif takes the very real disputes over oil fields in Bentieu as its point of departure. In 1999, Dr. Awad al-Jaz, Sudanese Minister of Energy and Mining, said at a press conference in Paris that by exporting oil for the first time, Sudan had overcome one of the biggest obstacles to its economic development (Rone "Rebels"; Human Rights Watch Sudan: Oil). What he did not mention was that the exploitation of the oilfields required the sudden death or displacement of southern pastoralists who had been occupying those lands. In fact, what the development of the economy meant for southern homelands was an intensification of attacks. In the years following, according to Jemera Rone, the oil revenues "enabled the Sudanese military to purchase attack helicopters and weapons that intensified the war and expanded oil 'protection'" (25). Furthermore, the oil companies "built new oilfield airstrips, bridges and roads which were promptly put to military use" (26). The Engineer himself muses on the intimate tie between economic development and military action after he is not only rejected by the Deceased, but recognizes his place among them:

> The world before the strike was a rooted place. After the strike, the map of the world has changed. It has become a heap of earth; death in any country and in any place and in any time (Laughter). The merchants of death (the business of death; the trade in death) engage in a booming business!

In an ironic twist, the arrival of the Engineer also triggers an atmosphere of sociality and organizing among the Deceased. Upon his arrival, the Deceased come out of their coffins and begin to organize, don helmets and prepare to ward off any assaults.

During the next scene, the Deceased begin to talk to one another and it is revealed that they have never done so up to this point. Grave 1 laments: "Maalish ya jamiah," (It's a pity everyone). The actor continues, "It's a shame we have never met before, despite the fact that some of us here died one hundred years ago and others have been here two hundred years or more. Isn't this a shame?" A Chorus of Deceased respond in unison: "Shame, Shame, Shame!" Taking charge, Grave 1 begins the introductions, and then asks for the "most ancient" of the Deceased to step forward and identify him/herself. The "first Deceased" steps forward and is identified as an Elder.

At this point, the play takes a turn and the Deceased begin dramatizing the labyrinth required of relatives who seek official documents certifying the death of their relatives. Assuming the role of a "foolish policeman," and addressing the Elder, Grave 4 states, "With your permission, we want to know the date of death, the cause of death, the technicalities, the taxes, the funeral budget, the means of burial, etc." The Elder now assumes the role of a father on an endless quest for an official death certificate, turning the stage into a common sight in Khartoum. With the centralized state, many must travel to the capital city to retrieve the Death Certificate, which is necessary for government business. The Elder walks around the stage, passing from window to window collecting the essential: four passport photos, document after document, but at every turn he is rejected and told to come back (Figure 17). Eventually he falls ill from the stress and frustration, overcome by the bureaucracy and the overpowering, threatening specter of "text":

> For many people throughout the world, [p]articularly subaltern groups, texts are often inaccessible, or threatening, charged with the regulatory powers of the state.

> More often than not, subordinate people experience texts and bureaucracy of literacy as instruments of control and displacement, e.g. green cards, passports, arrest warrants, deportation orders – what de Certeau calls 'intexuation.' ("Performance" 147)

Identifying with the Elder's plight, the Chorus pledges to lodge a complaint. Yet, to whom shall they complain?

Grave 1 suggests: "There is no one to help solve this problem… except the people of the Arab nations." The Chorus replies: "No, they have their own problems." Grave 1 tentatively asks: "Well, then why not the African nations?" The Chorus responds: "Too much for them." Grave 1 says sarcastically, "Ahh! We can move from nation to nation, but no one wants to solve the problem. Eventually, they think the problem will disappear," and as the actor turns and looks toward the group of Deceased, they hide, playfully disappearing from view. As a last option, the Chorus mentions the United Nations as a place to turn. The Elder scoffs at this idea, questioning whether he would be heard and falling despairingly into requests for "Pepsi, araki, liquor, beer…" The bureaucratic ritual of the Death Certificate is repeated, and the cycle continues.

In the center of Khartoum, as I described in the overview of performance traditions, Comboni Playground (*Ma'lab Comboni*) is an historic open-air stage and site built on land bought by the Catholic Church in the late 1920s and named in memory of Bishop Daniel Comboni, founder of the African Missions of Verona (Pierli "Daniel" 27 – 57). It is used for public gatherings of southerners for church events, sports events, and performance events including traditional dance festivities, and can easily accommodate hundreds of spectators.

The nature of this stage – its imposing concrete structure, its height, and its placement in the front of the performance space – emphasizes its conformity to Western theatrical conventions and announces its function in separating the audience from the stage and performers. Even further, in *Marhoum Alif,* the stage, a modality that always shapes and defines the space between performer and spectator, transforms in this play into a physical, metaphorical and conceptual border – a border between life and death. The actual setting depicts a literal graveyard, and a haunting refrain punctuates the action, continually reminding us of the border: *amshi hunak fi al-hudud been al-hayat wa al-mawt (go there, to the border between life and death).* The concept *barzakh* elaborated upon in Islamic theology is useful for gaining deeper insight into the "border" delineated throughout the play. Even as most members of Kwoto identify as Christian, they are conscious of working within an Islamic context in Sudan, and, as already discussed in the section on the play *Warnish,* both deliberately and unconsciously appropriate Islamic practices and an Islamic ethos in the performances. In light of this incorporation of concepts from the Islamic cosmos, such as the *jinn,* in Kwoto's plays, it seems valuable to turn to Islamic concepts such as the barzakh to illuminate the aesthetic and spiritual import of the border in *Marhoum Alif.* According to eleventh century Sufi mystic Ibn al 'Arabi, the "*barzakh* is like the dividing line between existence and non-existence" (Chittick 205). More broadly, and evocative in the context of a performance event, the term *barzakh* may refer to the whole intermediate realm between the spiritual and the corporeal, conceptualized as the "World of the Imagination (*khayl*) or Images (*mithal*) (Chittick 14). That is, the aesthetic arena itself is a barzakh in which the performers may

access otherwise inaccessible zones of consciousness and feeling. Within this framework, every expression made on stage is a mode of address that transports the performer over the border into the world of the living and simultaneously invites the spectator to transgress the border and enter the space of the dead. Moving back and forth, those on stage also invite us to exist momentarily *on* the border, in the realm of the imagination. In this world, ancient rites coexist with Christian prayer and Islamic rituals; the cycle of birth coexists with death; gourds coexist with cell phones; but the Dead feel separate from one another and from the rest of the world.

Assessing their situation as, in fact, dead, the Deceased recognize each other's stories and commiserate in the telling. Sometimes the stories are meant to name and give historical depth to the lives of the Deceased. For instance, one Grave lines the helmets along the edge of the stage, and points to each one, explaining, "this one died in an accident; this one died in WWI; this one wasn't supposed to die." Enfolding different types of death within the sphere of the performance, the play seems to want to remove "genocide" from its space of exceptionality and place it within a longer history of exploitation and violence done to southern communities. The helmets are also reminiscent of Ottoman military hats, and so link the legacy of premature and mass deaths in Sudan to policies and practices of national development and modernization instituted from before the postcolonial period.

Given the tiresome repetitiveness of this history in the space of the play, the stories themselves become circular, as each person realizes that his/her story is eclipsed by the threat of raids, of helicopters flying overhead, or of merely the disinterest officials

demonstrate in the story itself. In his role as a kind of spokesman, Grave 1 announces: "Why do we not persuade the people who sit over our heads?" The others ask, "Why?" He answers: "Because we are sitting down here, dead!" Chorus: "Yes, buried here for a long time. Grave 1: Yes, we are dead, there is no question about it." These lines echo the realm of the barzakh and the liminality of the deceased, but also point to their despair at the impossibility of communication.

Kwoto's theater regularly incorporates music and drama, with the performance of a play sandwiched between an array of dances; but in Marhoum Alif, the drum, or *nugara,* is utilized within the drama, setting off a "border realm" in the space of the production, inviting us to consider the possibility that we are leaving the realm of the living and entering the space and time of the ancestors.

As we do so, we should consider accounts of the ancestor cults of the southern Sudanese since, like the concept barzakh, they provide further cultural context for understanding the emotional, spiritual and aesthetic effects created by this play. Many southern Sudanese peoples observe ancestor rituals, including the Azande, Dinka, Nuba, Shilluk and Bari (Seligman 97, 379, 395). In trying to impress upon me the importance of land to the southern Sudanese and the great desire of many to return south, one interviewee said: "You can't think of a person apart from their land. The Ancestors are there; life is there" (Personal Interview). Scopas Poggo writes about the centrality of the belief in ancestral spirits among the agriculturalist Kuku, who engaged in a variety of ceremonies to communicate with and appease these spirits ("Kuku" 133). Funerals presented a particularly important site for the enactment of traditional rituals, and Poggo

notes that traditional Kuku funeral dances incorporated "the beating of drums, singing, blowing of horns, and ululation" ("Kuku" 133). The Seligmans describe the components of the cult of the ancestors among the Shilluk, where the spirits may be benevolent or malevolent, and people pray to and make offerings to dead intimates as well as royal ancestors, such as the king Nyakang (96 – 97). They also note that the Acholi expressed deep fear for those "down there" (97). Brenda Seligman observed an Azande ancestor ritual in 1909 – 1910 in Omdurman and recorded details about the participants in the ritual, including a young man named Farag who was possessed by the Zande king. When he was twelve years old, he was captured by Zubeir Pasha, a famous slaver of the Ottoman era, and his possession by the King, and later the Queen, led Farag to hear drums every week. Seligman also recorded details from the ceremony, of which a few are relevant to a reading of *Marhoum Alif:* ritual paraphernalia included burning incense, potatoes and ground nuts, the cherished possessions of a Sudanese soldier, including a gourd; costumes including belts decorated with feathers, a crown of feathers with cowries sewn to the base (Makris "Tumbura" 121).

As I mentioned when I opened this section, Kwoto performers use a variety of means and cultural signifiers to establish a space of ceremony for the play *Marhoum Alif.* The drums structure the rhythm of the event, a witch blesses the people in what the script calls an "African folkloric way" and a kujur enacts traditional Nuba rites. Offerings of ground nuts are set out, women carry the helmets as babies and a man caresses his ox. In these ways and others, the space is transformed into ancestral space, and it is the ancestors who are talking.

Of course, the play suggests that they cannot be heard, and the world's deafness toward them is made to analogize the deafness the displaced themselves experience. In a hysterical frenzy in the beginning, the Engineer improvises: "I want Water, Crystal, Pepsi, Beer, give me Internet, and…" (Figures 15 and 16). The stage resembles a global marketplace, and the Deceased (and by implication, the displaced) circulate there. That the Deceased hold cell phones during the opening scene, presumably trying to call for outside help during the earthquake, merely emphasizes this point. Both the Deceased and the displaced are faced with the forces of commodification that silences them as agents. Both the Deceased and the displaced experience themselves as dependent on and yet dead to the global arenas of problem-solving. As their conversations are swallowed up by yet another raid, the Chorus of Deceased shout, while pointing to each other as well as their audience, "Are we part of the world or not part of the world? Am I in or out of the world? We are not only out of the world; we are out of the Third World!"

The play stages the genocidal event as a foundational moment activating a broader critique of modernization and of the invasive and controlling power of the State over all aspects of life and death. Contemporary military campaigns are linked with a longer history of plunder, looting and extraction of people and resources that have characterized the economy since at least the Ottoman Empire, thereby troubling any facile periodizations of the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial eras. The play's staged encounter between the invaluable resources, tools and commodities of modernization on the one hand, and the disposable and apparently worthless bodies of the Deceased/ displaced on the other, dramatizes insights by such postcolonial critics as Achille

Mbembe who point out the devaluing of people and the overvaluing of things inherent to colonial and postcolonial violence ("At the Edge" 260). As we saw, the Deceased in *Marhoum Alif* are surrounded and bounded by "crazy products" and animated things. This is in direct contrast to the "powerful contemporary tendency" laid out by Arjun Appadurai "to regard the world of things as inert and mute, set in motion and animated, indeed knowable, only by persons and their words" ("Introduction" 4).

I read Marhoum Alif as an interpretation of and critical commentary on the more sinister effects of modernization and their relationship to one another: extreme forms of commodification, violence and genocide. The Deceased are condemned to die again and again, and to experience the bureaucratic procedures of the death industry, until they are able to find justice from the international community. Further and important for the analysis, I argue that central to the play is a self-reflexivity that theorizes the issue of the silencing and commodification of the stories and bodies of the displaced themselves, subject to what Alfred called the "continent-factory" in a 2000 speech ("Peace").

It is in the context of the deadening of social relations and ever deepening commodification that the ancestor rituals appear. Speaking of who has died in this play, Stephen Affear Ochalla says:

> My grandfather, maybe my children, maybe my neighbor. Somebody died but we don't know who. But it doesn't only have to be a physical thing or the body. Ideas also die. Maybe humanity itself has died in this society. (Personal Interview)

In his reading of the recontextualized Azande ancestor rituals, Makris notes that the spirits themselves can transform from "spirits of morality" in their original cultural context to amoral spirits in their new setting ("Tumbura" 122).

Like the ex-slaves and sudani before them who engaged in zar tumbura, the southerners in this play are recontextualizing the ancestor rituals. Here, the arena is secular, and the audience includes aid workers, Westerners as well as displaced and northern Sudanese. Are the characters (and performers) in *Marhoum Alif* trying to placate the ancestors? Or calling for help from outsiders? Is the play itself a propitiatory act? Or is it possible that the displaced in this play are reclaiming the center of Khartoum in the name of the ancestors and incorporating them as part of an emerging community.

In this section, I aimed to examine select Kwoto plays for what they could tell us about southern perspectives on the transformation of kinship in Khartoum. In *Haj Yousif,* the naïve rural southerners' reliance on personal networks of communication is shown to be insufficient for the complicated bureaucracy and corruption of the city. Literacy is promoted as protection against abuse, but also the facilitator of a pan-Southern community and nation. In *Al-Hoosh,* the "home"/hoosh is shown to be as dangerous as the street. Occupying the domestic sphere with ease, it is the young southern male who paves the way for a new ethical urban subjectivity. In *Warnish,* the disassociation from family is equated also to a profound disconnection from History. Cynical and street-smart, the young shamasha immerse themselves in the realm of fantasy and commodities. Their ability to "varnish history" is an apt metaphor for the voracious social appetite for the "re-made" individual in the 21st century. Finally, in *Marhoum Alif,* I considered the reconstitution on stage of a truly extended southern family; this family extended at once toward the ancestors and the global community. I showed how the plays that I examined privilege a pan-Southern identity that downplays particular markers of ethnic difference.

Interestingly, the figure of the "urbanized southern male" and especially the "shamasha" surfaced as a stock character that signifies multiply for the displaced southern community. These plays reveal southern ambivalence towards the shamasha and his occupation of a liminal realm between south and north. I identified the gendering of the "south" as female in *Haj Yousif,* and the inversion of male hierarchies in *Al-Hoosh,* and I explored the director's appropriations of indigenous rituals and spiritual traditions in the productions of *Warnish* and *Marhoum Alif.* All of these plays address the North/South divide in Sudan as a structuring presence in the lives of the displaced southerner, and all devise strategies for shaping and sustaining a potential unity for all the overlapping identities that comprise an emerging Sudan in the context of the contemporary world system.

Practices of Unity

According to scholar Salah El-Din El-Shazali, the powerlessness of southerners is linked to their lack of access to "objects and symbols that are central to the maintenance and propagation of sociocultural identity, value systems and practices" (42). Kwoto directors are engaged in the process of reinventing these objects and symbols, and helping to create the space for the development of new concepts of self-as-agent, especially for the members of the Center.

Kwoto's emphasis on unity, collectivity and equality shaped their recruiting and training principles in unpredictable ways. For example, given that theater as a professional endeavor was fairly new to southern communities, the directors were intent

on demonstrating not only the utility of theater to the community, but also its seriousness. To this end, some individuals were accepted into the group on a trial basis, and were asked to prove their competence in the performing arts (for a period of weeks) as well as their commitment to maintaining the troupe's standards. Underlying the emphasis on hard work and pride was a recognition of and sensitivity toward the conditions that bred nihilism, depression, and violence in the lives of the displaced. From Ochalla's point of view, the skills and comportment learned in Kwoto were integrally linked to the survival of self and community:

> Kwoto wants to teach members how to direct, how to guide and how to respect each other. They must learn how to preserve the equipment, how to manage shows, how to lecture on arts topics or conduct workshops to and for the community. Also, members have to learn how to accept themselves and others and how to become a member – not to isolate themselves in groups. (Personal Interview)

"Becoming a member," I suggest, means also becoming a member in an ongoing public discourse on what it means to be "southern," what it means to be "Sudanese" and what it means to be "modern." The performance space here competes with the school as a disseminator of sanctioned social and cultural values, a situation that is not uncommon according to theater scholar David Kerr. Kerr writes that in many African contexts, theater serves as a mechanism for adult education because of the failure of existing educational institutions, most often inherited from colonial forms, to adequately address the needs and conditions of the majority of citizens (145). One twenty nine year old male audience member defined Kwoto as a "form of education," and attested that it "took part in the upbringing of generations" (Personal Interview); others noted that the lack of options in the cultural sphere (some complained that only Indian movies were shown in

cinema houses in Khartoum, others mentioned the lack of diversity on TV) made Kwoto's work that much more important.[30] In response to questions regarding how participation in Kwoto had influenced them, a number of Kwoto members stressed the importance of interacting freely and intimately with youth from ethnic groups different from their own. James Ewaj, a Shilluk and member of the inaugural troupe, suggested that participation in Kwoto helped some members overcome deeply rooted stereotypes they had about groups with whom they had never before come into contact. Stephen Ochalla conceptualized the emergence of southern unity as tied to their experience in the north:

> Now, if peace comes, and they move back to resettle the south, they will move back together. They have learned a lot of things in the north; they have learned to be one. They have learned a lot of things: one major lesson we've learned is to ask why are we killing ourselves? The northerners did not want us to be unified, but our stay in the north has shown us that we can be unified. Coming to Khartoum politicized us. All the groups were pushed out – there were no favorites, whereas in the South, the government chose favorites. (Personal Interview).

In response to a question asking about Kwoto's main purpose, Beej Louis, a member, said: "They have a purpose, a message. The purpose is to communicate the culture and the message is delivered through the group, not by the individual because an individual cannot do it alone. Before Kwoto, the Shilluk did their thing; the Dinka did their thing, but no one came together. Kwoto shows that we can gather and become one" (Kaul Personal Interview).

Both Kwoto's promotional materials and interviews attest to the importance of "unity" to the group. Through my analysis and interpretations of select plays, I have tried to offer a picture of how some of these works negotiate the pressures of displacement and

depict a changing and embattled kinship structure. In the previous section, I suggested that the plays in Juba Arabic privilege unity among southerners, and depict stories of fractured families and ethnic division in order to explore strategies for transcending these divisions. In this section, I discuss some of Kwoto's practices as a Center as they correspond to and grapple with the concept of unity.

As I mentioned in the first pages of this chapter, at its inception, Kwoto was supported by the Ford Foundation (1993 – 1997). The award amount was put toward supplies, rent, research and production, salaries, meals, transportation, props and miscellaneous materials ("Kwoto's History" 3). When the Ford Foundation decided to pull funding from Sudan, the group existed as a self-funded entity, and in 1999, the Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED) stepped in with a grant of $25,000. According to NED's funding reports, they sponsored Kwoto in the staging of "70 multi-lingual performances of dance, music, and theater which will focus on unity, human rights, democracy and peace. These performances also will provide information on health, environmental, economic and scientific issues in languages the people can understand. Kwoto will perform for displaced persons' camps throughout Sudan, students and northern and southern Sudanese communities" (NED 1999), echoing some of the rhetoric of the TfD projects from the 1970s.

Aware of the thorny issues related to funding and the politics of TfD and African cultural troupes more generally, I considered the investigation of the sources of funding as crucial to my understanding of Kwoto's development (Kerr *African* 149 – 208). As Penina Muhando Mlama and Laura Edmondson have discussed, donor agencies often

impose their own agendas when they offer money to cultural organizations ("Theatre Activism" 25 – 28). I did ask the Managing Director Derik Alfred whether he thought the funding from Ford or NED influenced the content of the plays. He told me in no uncertain terms that the funding was "no strings attached" and they were given free rein to produce shows as they saw fit. I met once with the administrator in charge of Africa at NED, who during the tenure of the grant would visit Kwoto's premises for a few days once a year, and he too expressed trust that the directors in Sudan knew best what subjects and mediums should be pursued. Still, the question of funding is a complex one with multiple ramifications and the "shaping" may begin as early as the moment when Ford or NED selects a "deserving" group to fund. After some further investigation into the roots of the NED and their ambiguous connections with the U.S. government and the CIA, despite their professed non-governmental status, I began to reflect on the way funding organizations may appropriate local group's aims in order to further external definitions of democracy and, in another direction, capitalist development and free markets. In his history of African theater forms, David Kerr states that "one of the most subtle forms of neo-colonial control was through funding" (African 240 – 241), and he further quotes Kanyari Kaguongo's analysis that "the foreign ex-colonial camp's interest in the cultural activities of Africa is a public-relations-cum-propaganda drive…Their target is our socio-economic system. They are trying to impose on us their models" (qtd in Kerr *African* 241).[31] On the other hand, Zakes Mda notes that international funding from Ford helped the Marotholi Travelling Theatre in Lesotho to "create plays that emanate from the community rather than those whose themes and content have been

suggested by the development agencies" (67). In the end the responses I received to my questions did not afford further insights into the mutually constitutive relationship of the funds and performances, and I relied on my own observations to make some conclusions about Kwoto's own relationship to the development of an incipient capitalist economy and the funders' interests. I decided that pursuing the topic in-depth was beyond the scope of the dissertation. Still, I believe the politics of funding is an essential aspect of Kwoto's theater, and cultural troupes more generally, and I would hope to include this topic in any expanded version of this research. It is worth noting that Kwoto's efforts at "self-sufficiency" which characterized some Kenyan and Nigerian university traveling theater troupes' and Ngugi's famous Kamiriithu Cultural Centre were severely limited by the unique economic context of Sudan since the mid-1980s which has left masses of people with no source of income (the second civil war in 1983 and the Islamic regime which Islamized financial institutions since 1989).[32]

The funding issue then raises some interesting questions related to the kinds of affiliations Kwoto wanted to nurture, or were compelled to nurture, and the role of international and transnational agencies in promoting human rights discourses that are rejected by the state. Ironically, it seems that the more the voice of the "southerners" is suppressed within the national sphere, the more that voice has emerged on the horizon of the international circuit. The use of the word "network" conjures up the Internet as a medium by which the word of the southerner gets increasingly disseminated. The Internet tends to connect those in cities like Khartoum with those in metropolitan centers outside the country before it connects interregionally, therefore facilitating the "intimacy-at-a-

distance" that Anthony Giddens suggests is a hallmark of modernity. He writes, "The advent of modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between 'absent' others locationally distant from any given situations of face-to-face interaction" (18 – 19). This process has important implications for identity formation in Khartoum, and for Kwoto's theater and is raised as a subject in plays such *Marhoum Alif (The Deceased X).* When I was in Khartoum, Kwoto's directors were engaged in conversations about how best to utilize the Internet as a tool for identity-formation and fostering connections with potential allies and supporters outside Sudan. Funded by the Prince Claus Foundation, a projected Kwoto Website was expected to serve as a forum where Kwoto's directors anticipated posting photos and information on the performances, but also features such as monthly recipes of "southern" dishes that they hoped would appeal to those in the southern diaspora (Alfred Personal Interview).[33] In 2002, there were no restaurants in Khartoum serving "southern" food, and even if there were, the majority of southerners could not afford to eat in a restaurant; thus, the desire to project "southern cuisine" on their website struck me as a sort of anticipatory effort to imagine a future place for 'southern cuisine' (and more broadly southern cultures) in an increasingly differentiated economy. Furthermore, the idea of "southern cuisine" as a commodity both served to symbolize a set of identifications to "southern culture" and upwardly-mobile consumptive practices *and* seemed to respond to deep nostalgia many southerners expressed for a "South" they imagined as abundant and fertile (Alfred Personal Interview; also see Loveless 24 – 29).

The recruitment practices of the troupe are also relevant to the group's deliberate attempt to create certain kinds of identifications and affiliations. According to the directors, they posted advertisements in parishes, schools, and after-school centers to recruit potential members for the initial troupe. About three hundred male and female youth (15 – 33) applied. Some of Kwoto's members came to Kwoto already experienced in theater from their participation in Church theater groups (Kaul Personal Interview), and most had some degree of schooling. Even so, both Derik Alfred and Stephen Affear Ochalla noted the misperceptions about theater within southern communities and the resistance among some parents to have their children involved, thinking it would encourage inappropriate or "loose" behavior, or interfere with school ("Kwoto's History" 4 – 5; Ochalla Personal Interview). Moreover, some southern elites were overtly opposed to Kwoto's activities, suggesting that southerners must "look forward to modern and sophisticated (*raqi*) things," and "leave the traditional behind" and that Kwoto was privileging "low" culture (Ochalla Personal Interview; Alfred Personal Interview).

According to documents recording Kwoto's history, each applicant auditioned for and interviewed with the directors. The formal criteria for selection included: 1.) the ability to speak one or more indigenous language and 2.) the ability to act or dance one or more traditional dance. Forty-five applicants were selected among those interviewed, and this group became the first official Kwoto troupe ("Kwoto's History" 3). Artistic director Stephen Affear Ochalla emphasized that other qualities were also taken into account in selecting members. Ochalla said that although in theory "anyone could join," in practice, the person had to demonstrate a "sense that s/he wants to be unified with

other people" (Personal Interview). A glance at Kwoto's repertoire also suggests an attempt on the part of the directors to refrain from partiality or favoritism in their presentation of southern cultures. Although the Dinka represent the largest ethnic group in the Sudan, for example, Kwoto includes only three songs identified as Dinka among the repertoire of twenty-eight songs, which may be an attempt to assuage the fears among some southerners of "Dinka domination" due to their numbers and presence in the rebel movement, and historical conflicts between Equatorian and Nilotic groups in the south (Johnson "The South" 1 – 2).

The question of how to represent the south, when it is in fact "many souths" as Kwoto's directors acknowledged, was a crucial one. If, as many scholars have noted, language is a crucial component for asserting and defining "national" identity (Anderson; Gellner), it is certainly significant that Kwoto uses varieties of Arabic to communicate. Kwoto's use of Juba Arabic, as I noted earlier, is one strategy Kwoto uses to unify a diverse community and "reinvent" their subjectivity while gesturing toward their history. As I noted during my discussion of Amouna Kabase and performance traditions in Sudan, Juba Arabic is a language of the contact zone, informed by the history of slavery and the Ottoman empire. Indeed, the use of Juba Arabic can be understood as an ambivalent practice, since it serves as a reminder of the porosity of cultures in Sudan (and the richness that inheres from this blending) and as a living symbol of social and material inequities. Juba Arabic is also a lingua franca among southerners and a language of class formation, and thus a potential unifying force for peoples from over 50 ethnic backgrounds.[34] By using Juba Arabic, which constitutes one form of Sudanese colloquial,

Kwoto also intervenes in debates among theater practitioners as to what language is appropriate for the Arabic stage, *fusha* (or classical Arabic) or *amiya* (colloquial). By firmly choosing to utilize amiya, and particularly Juba Arabic, Kwoto aligns themselves with a "southern" and subaltern audience, and argues forcefully for the legitimacy of this language for the performance arena. Furthermore, the depiction of "low culture" is an assertion of subaltern claims on public space in Sudan and serves then as a challenge to the government's right to define what constitutes the national culture. Security forces considered the use of Juba Arabic and indigenous languages enough of a threat as to call Kwoto directors to appear before the court in 1994 for "inciting rebellion" ("Kwoto's History" 4). Stephen Affear Ochalla, who also wrote the play *Marhoum Alif,* describes the importance of language choice to Kwoto's goals, and to the formation of alternative public consciousness among southerners:

> Because of the government (NIF), many of us known Arabic by force, because it is what is taught in the schools, but they (the Northerners) known nothing about us. Then there are the southerners who are not educated, new migrants who do not know any Arabic. It is good to translate things – from Arabic to Dinka to English, and the other way around, but those who want everything in *fusha* (classical Arabic) do not seem to want southerners to learn. There are so many people coming from the South and I guess my first priority is to communicate information to them about their histories and about their backgrounds. We need to do this in their languages or in simple Arabic (*Arabi Juba,* Juba Arabic) and English. (Personal Interview)

By using Juba Arabic as *fanan* (professional artists), Kwoto's directors confer a respectability on the language as a medium for expressing southern cultures on stage. Kwoto participates in the making of new practices and traditions and producing new forms of identification and affiliation in the urban setting of Khartoum. Juba Arabic is a lingua franca bringing many southern groups together, Kwoto's plays tend to focus on the

individual as an urbanized southerner first and foremost, downplaying markers of a particular ethnicity or showing those markers to be divisive and self-defeating.

Kwoto's directors appropriated the language of kinship in order to legitimate their theater practice to southerners, naturalize their belonging as transethnic southerners in Khartoum, and assert their presence as against the dominant Arab-Islamic culture. In order to establish themselves as a legitimate locus of cultural production as well as a stable refuge for southern Sudanese in Sudan, Kwoto's directors draw upon narratives of precolonial belonging among East African pastoralist groups. According to newspaper coverage of the troupe, as well as the troupe's own funding materials, Kwoto is a word of Toposa origin, the Toposa being a small pastoralist group on the south-eastern border of Sudan. Called "semi-nomadic," the Toposa are included among the Turkana-speaking groups in the anthropological record *Pagan Tribes of Nilotic Sudan* compiled by C.G. and Brenda Seligman as the "Topotha" (362 – 365). Historically occupying land traversing the nation-states of Kenya, Uganda and Sudan, today the Toposa of Sudan live in Eastern Equatoria at Torit. Kwoto's materials narrate the migration and origins of the Toposa in the following manner:

> Their first ancestors came to the present land where they live with many other tribes called 'Ateker' which means people from one common father. The different groups of specialized pastoralist societies identify collectively as the Ateker or 'clan' cluster. When the Toposa came from Najie to the present area, they brought with them the 'sacred stone' of the covenant called *Kwoto,* and placed it east of the Lovoro River. This is the place where every Toposa male must go to be initiated and later on receive power from retired elders (generation-set). It is said that from time to time animals are sacrified there during big religious events. Recently, a Toposa youth told us that there is a place called Kwoto near the stone, where violence is forbidden. It is a place of complete peace, brotherhood and humanity. ("Kwoto's History" 3)

The directors go further in explaining how they view the connections between the "kwoto" stone and the space it sacralizes and the activities of the Kwoto troupe:

> We are from different tribes, different cultures, but we are seeking unity among ourselves and others. When we maintain that, we render that to generations to come. Thus is a covenant of Kwoto; that we accept not only from Toposa or Ateker, but for the entire South, Sudan, and the world if possible. ("Kwoto's History" 4)

The narrative of "Ateker" and the covenant of kwoto function for Kwoto as a narrative of group solidarity and indigeneity. Through a process of selection and exclusion, Kwoto's appropriation of the Toposa and Ateker narratives partake in an ideological, cultural nationalist rhetoric of a "peaceful tribe" linked through kinship. The principle of male continuity does important cultural work in maintaining social stability and guarding power; the principle of patrilineality, agnatic relation and fraternal bonds appears also to revive an image of a potent south emasculated through northern predation, colonialism and internal conflicts. On the one hand, the "covenant" – a "binding and unifying force" (El Hussei 14) serves as a symbol of precolonial customary law, but on the other, it echoes Christian ideas of peace and unity that inform the educated southern elite (Sanderson *Education* 419 – 439; Deng *War* 185 – 239). The idea of "Ateker" as a customary brotherhood links with the concept of the "covenant" as a fraternity sanctified by Christianity and thus brings together dominant conceptions of community (the "tribe" and the "communal") from a precolonial tradition and from Christian themes that have been internalized and indigenized (see Deng *War* 185 – 239). The concept of the Christian covenant facilitates a universalizing gesture not accorded the concept of 'Ateker.' These two ideas serve as a doubly powerful trope by which Kwoto models its

own aspirations toward unity. I further suggest that Kwoto's use of a concept from the Toposa, a small group in the far south, is strategic in its avoidance of privileging concepts from the numerically dominant pastoralists Dinka and Nuer. Moreover, by gesturing toward the far south of Sudan, Kwoto's directors arguably gesture toward inventing an "indigenous" space, imaginatively untouched by either colonial institutions or Islamization; furthermore, the Toposa and the "Ateker" with whom they are related, invoke the powerful pastoralist institutions of age-sets and warriors.

Interestingly, however, when it came to certain pastoralist practices of marking the male at initiation, Kwoto's practices notably diverged from custom. Noticing large numbers of young southern men (usually Dinka and Nuer) with facial scarification (often, six parallel marks across the forehead) on the streets of Khartoum, and yet the absence of any scarified men among the troupe members, I asked Alfred about this absence and whether the rules for membership allowed for scarification.[35] Alfred responded that anyone who wanted to join was equally invited to audition, and had an equal chance at admittance. In other words, if this person could sing, dance and/or act, and met the requirements for language, he could potentially be a member of Kwoto. I was led to believe that these scarified young men were not auditioning for Kwoto and were not expressing interest in becoming members of a troupe of this type. On the other hand, during his lecture to the students of Africa College, which I attended, and which was transcribed in the *Khartoum Monitor,* Alfred expressed his thoughts on certain southern traditions that in his estimation should be discarded, and the list included scarification. He said:

> There are cultural elements which must be discouraged like the scarring of the forehead of the Dinka and some other ethnic groups, a practice, which is now disappearing with time. These things have lost their significance in society. The removal of the teeth and the severing of the ear by the Otuho are gradually fading away as outdated. This is cultural dynamism. There has to be a Cultural Revolution. (Terso "Africa" 10)

Only after this lecture did I also notice the play in Kwoto's repertoire on HIV/AIDS that targets "scarification" and traditional tattooing as the prime culprits for the spread of this disease.

Anthropologist Sharon Hutchinson provides more historical background on the issue of scarification, the attempts at its eradication and its resurgence in recent years in Khartoum. According to Hutchinson, rural Nuer and urban elite Nuer of the 1980s were engaged in debates about the efficacy of scarification as a ritual initiating manhood, triggered in part by the gradual emergence of school-educated Nuer men who had rejected scarification (and initiation entirely) "in an effort to identify themselves more broadly with other 'black peoples' of southern Sudan and elsewhere in Africa" (*Nuer* 270). Hutchinson also notes the role of Church-educated elite from the 1940s – on in disseminating the value of eliminating scarification (*Nuer* 288). According to traditional mores of the Nuer, these men were called "bull-boys" to acknowledge their liminal status between the category of full "man" and young "boy" – as the status of man could not be attained without the initiation and scarification (270). According to contemporary scarified Nuer, the "bull-boy" not only lacked the status of manhood, but also the "agnatic spear-calls" and "formal membership in an age-set," all considered essential to individual dignity and community survival (290). The debate grew fiercer when the Nuer SPLM commander Riek Machar outlawed scarification in 1986-7, citing both scientific

and sociological evidence to support his decree (296 – 297), including the justification that the absence of scarification would lead to the unity of "southerners" and to the ability of southerners to affiliate with other blacks within and outside of Sudan (296 – 297). When the SPLM was first established in 1983, the organization sought to establish "southernness" as a transethnic identity among recruits and so mute any loyalty to a specific ethnic identity. As Hutchinson and Jok explain, this was done not only to engender feelings of a pan-southern nationalism and reduce ethnic tensions, but to promote cohesion among troops who may face-off with fellow southerners recruited to the national army ("Gendered" 105). However, it is significant to note that the scarification ritual has remained so important among some groups that mothers and fathers continue to send their sons to rural areas and even to Khartoum in order to get it done, which was clearly demonstrated in 2002 (Hutchinson 297).

Whether the absence of scarified youth among Kwoto members is a conscious strategy or a de facto result of Kwoto's appeal to certain youth populations, it is clear that its absence aligns Kwoto with the category of "bull-boy" and therefore also the category of the "school-educated," the "new elite," the "town-boy" or *malakiyya*, and the Christian (Hutchinson *Nuer* 288). I do not mean to suggest that every member of Kwoto was, in fact, school-educated, because they were not, but only to suggest that as a group Kwoto was carving a space for a different set of identifications for young southern youth than the ethnic loyalty evidenced by *gaar* (scarification). Both an aspiration toward "unity," together with ideologies of "modernity" seem the most convincing reasons for the absence of scarified boys in Kwoto. That is, Kwoto directors' active selection of certain

precolonial customs (that of 'Ateker' and the covenant 'kwoto') also meant the rejection of other customs. The absence of scarification in Kwoto may also be reflective of the preponderance of members of ethnic groups who do not scarify, such as some of the Equatorian groups such as the Lokoya and Bari.

Kwoto's stance on scarification intersects also with class identifications in ways that are complex. Scarification is essential to "becoming a man" in traditional pastoralist communities, and is therefore bound to traditional elders and positions of leadership; Hutchinson discusses the continuance of scarified men in positions of power among the rural Nuer of the 1980s, but equally the appearance of "bull-boys" in chiefly and governmental positions who argued that the absence of scars reflected their detachment from ties of kinship, which spoke to their objectivity and impartiality (*Nuer* 257). Clearly, though, "bull-boys" were perceived as having an edge in terms of employment in modern institutions of the towns, and therefore social mobility and opportunities for assimilation into the national and international elite. Kwoto's subtle (and not-so-subtle) identification with the unscarified seemed to position them as emerging elite who could speak to a widening circle of affiliates. It is also possible to view the appropriation of certain pastoralist traditions (like the 'Ateker' age-set) as modernized (and as a symbol of class formation and mobility) within the context of urban Khartoum. For example, traditionally stratified by gender and age as well as ethnicity, the modern recontextualized 'Ateker' of the Kwoto Cultural Center included members from multiple ethnic groups as well as from many ages and marital statuses. As a "modernized age-set" or an "age-set of the educated" (Deng *Dinka and their Songs* 11), the ritual of

scarification would need to be rejected. Whether Kwoto's play on AIDS and scarification was the result of community dialogue, the expression of the directors' own interests, or the solicitation from a health NGO is unclear.

Related to this question of affiliation and unity is the issue of audience and purpose. The first of Kwoto's performances that I witnessed was on June 6th 2002, a few days after my arrival, at the compound of a Brazilian delegate. Kwoto dancers, wearing synthetic leopard skins over t-shirts, ankle bells, beaded belts, necklaces and sneakers, entertained official guests with "traditional" dances. For the spectators aware of possible local meanings, the leopard skins could have evoked the Nuer earth master, a position of great spiritual, political and rhetorical authority.[36] For others, however, the cloth, cut low at the neck and belted with beads, together with other accoutrements and bodily comportment of the dancers, easily brings to mind a stock set of colonial stereotypes of African "ritual" "performance" and "primitivism" today staged for tourists. In the introduction to her book on *jali* performers in Gambia, Paula Ebron reminds us that for the international imagination, "performance itself becomes a trope representing Africa" (10). In his essays on popular theater in Africa, David Kerr argues that "tourists" need not be foreigners, but also nationals from a different class or ethnic group. He analyzes the "demystification" and domestication of ritual performance when it is performed for foreign or national tourists and argues that the dances lose their culture value and social function in such settings (Kerr 207). El Effendi has observed that northern Sudanese tend to treat the "south" as a distant land, one foreign to their sensibilities, exotic and in need of "discovering" and saving ("Discovering the South"); Albino, like many others,

describes the North/South relationship as one of internal colonialism and relations of dependency and describes the paternalistic attitude among some northerners (see Albino 5). Given that this particular performance was staged for a diverse audience of elite foreign nationals, and was attended by numerous elite northern Sudanese government officials wearing the northern male Muslim dress of *jalabiyya* and *'emma* (turban) one could argue that indeed the mise en scène was organized in such a way as to conform to the expectations of a colonial and touristic gaze.

In materials produced for funding purposes, Kwoto directors list as their main beneficiaries "the displaced Southerners in the North, as well as the entire Southern Sudanese" but in a later section assert definitively that their aim is "thus promoting unity, amongst not only Sudanese of the south, but of all Sudanese" (5). Their stance on "unity" echoes John Garang's and the SPLM's official stance promoting the unity of the entire Sudanese nation-state, rather than the separatist or secessionist desires of the first civil war (Khalid 4). As of the year 2000, Kwoto registered under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the National Council for Arts Preservation, No. 50, May 20, 2000. In order to operate as a legal entity, Kwoto was required to register their organization, and at that time, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism were integrated.[37] It is important to consider, however, if a "touristic" model of Kwoto's activities was gaining ascendancy in the work they presented, as described above, and if so, why this may be happening and how it is understood by participants. According to Kwoto's Portfolio, they presented 350 shows from 1994 – 2001 "in areas where Southern peoples dwell" (9). In the year 2001 – 2002, they presented sixty shows for "displaced populations, students,

northern and southern communities and NGOs" and planned to increase to seventy-five shows by 2003 – 2004 (17). Considering their aims, it is interesting to note that their evaluation report for 2002 – 2003 record a total of seventy-eight shows performed, divided in the following manner: eleven shows for the displaced southerners (IDPs); seven shows for students; eleven shows for the southern Sudanese communities; twenty-two shows for the northern Sudanese communities; four shows for NGOs; and fifteen shows in Holland for a global theater festival ("Evaluation" 1).

The distribution of performances is worth commenting on. The report explains that seventeen of the twenty-two shows for northern communities were during Ramadan and took place at the Meridien Hotel, a high-end hotel in Khartoum. While I was in Khartoum, Kwoto sometimes received paying jobs from the Hotel. Given that the external funding is temporary with the aim of Kwoto attaining self-sufficiency, Kwoto directors must find ways of garnering income to sustain their Center. As already noted, unlike popular troupes in West and East Africa that charge admission and thus develop a popular audience from among the "intermediate classes" (Barber *Generation* 1), Kwoto cannot charge its target audiences of southern Sudanese, since these communities are too poor to afford expenditures on leisure activities. In this context, hotels and other tourist scenarios provide one option for commercial enterprise. Performing for foreign nationals may also indicate the importance of supra-national support (financial and otherwise) and alliance to the group's very existence and flourishing. Kwoto's appearance at the diplomat's residence could furthermore be interpreted as a step toward desired "unity" and a strategy for the assertion of southern cultures in an atmosphere that has for so long

suppressed them. As early as 1954, on the cusp of independence, the Commission on Education in Khartoum recommended the Arabization of southern educational institutions and the discontinuation of southern vernaculars as "media of instruction at any level of education" arguing that "the vocabularies of southern languages are []limited" and that "such vernaculars have no literature and cannot be used as cultural media" (Sanderson *Education* 337). Thus, exposing northern elites to southern cultural traditions may be understood as an attempt to undo over five decades of educational and cultural policies that had the effect of undermining and extinguishing those traditions. Furthermore, the current climate of displacement, impoverishment and Islamization lead many southerners to be further concerned that southern traditions are under threat of extinction (Loveless 24 – 29). Pressla Joseph, a professor at Bahr al-Ghazal University interprets the conditions of contemporary "cultural borrowing" as coercive and threatening a loss of integrative aspects of southern traditions (Abusharaf 55). Hence, in this climate, Kwoto is perceived as recovering and preserving "disappearing" traditions. Kwoto's directors usually described their performances for northerners and Arab audiences in ways that highlighted their potential for building bridges and tolerance. They were proud that "northerners love Kwoto" and also made a point to tell me about their performances in Dubai and to show me videotapes. According to Alfred, the performances in Dubai and other Arab settings had a subtle political aim:

> We are staging the Sudanese identity in an international forum. The audience will have to ask themselves, "Who are you?" and also ask why the Sudanese government and media does not portray the strength and beauty of southern cultures but only our helplessness, neediness and vulnerability. We want them [in Dubai] to see that we have potential, that we are humane; that we have cultures; we would like to them to say, 'that is a beautiful dance.' (Personal Interview)

When I asked Alfred if he defined Kwoto as a "political" theater troupe or the work as "protest theater" he responded: "Well, we do not call ourselves politicians; we do not even use political terminology. [Political] change takes a long time – it is not something that is instant. You cannot limit art to one historical moment" (Personal Interview).

Alfred was aware, however, that not all southerners agreed with his tactics. When I asked him if some southerners were displeased that Kwoto performed for northerners, Alfred responded: "Yes, we have had responses like that during the Peace Through Music Concert in 2001 (with the northern musical group Igd al Galad). Some southerners would say, 'You can't perform with the enemy!' But art transcends that" (Personal Interview). At another time Alfred said, "Art is the chance for you to know me better and you to show me aspects of your culture. And then we see these things are all Sudanese" (Personal Interview). Not everyone I spoke with believed that art could transcend the animosities and structural inequalities. Two southern male university students I spoke with were critical of Kwoto's strategies although they were careful to express their support for the overall message. One of them, a graduate student in Physics at the University of Khartoum, said that the Kwoto group is "rejecting the domination" of the hegemonic group. While in theory he supported their efforts, he did not like that they agreed to be on television and called the broadcast a "tactic by the government to delude people in believing that they have respect for other cultures" (Personal Interview).

Many among the theater for development and Theater of the Oppressed practitioners would critique the touristic performances as disconnected from community interests, alienated from the performer's self-development and conforming to the strict

dichotomy of spectator / performer. These performances also may be construed as illustrating the "logic of conviviality" between ruler and ruled that Mbembe says is the primary logic of the postcolony (*On the Postcolony* 110). It also expresses contentment; it is a performance that, even if inadvertently, stabilizes the very regime responsible for the performers' own marginalization and suffering. In these and other ways, the focus on tourist performances and the different social and economic conditions of the performance may be construed as in tension with a focus on benefiting displaced southern communities. These cross-cultural and touristic settings may fulfill genuine attempts at cross-cultural understanding and healing, but they may also be co-opted by state officials eager to prove their tolerance to the world community.

Other interviewees were more disturbed by Kwoto's performances of the dances, since they felt these were sacred and required customary training and apprenticeship to learn. By mixing and matching dances, recontextualizing them and staging them publicly, one university student felt that the cultures were undermined and trivialized. The dances that occurred at the diplomat's compound were "stripped" of their original social functions, transformed into secular entertainment and "demystified" in the words of theater scholar David Kerr, in that they are disconnected from any traditional ritual context such as initiations, harvesting, weddings or funerals. But one could argue that they fulfilled yet a new social function: that of unity. Too, the diplomat's residence was not the only context for performance, as I have described. Most of the performances I would attend were staged in the official IDP camps and in shanty-towns located in the peri-urban areas surrounding Khartoum. These were the usual destinations for Kwoto's

tours of the city, and performers told me that these were the audiences who meant most to them. Significantly, the dances remained the same, but this time audience members, and especially older women wearing the *tobe,* a loose-fitting fabric wrap, rose and joined the performers in the performance space, enacting the atmosphere of participation characteristic of popular performance (see Figures 18 and 19)[38] During the performance at the delegate's compound, the audience watched politely but from a distance. During the performances at the IDP camps and outlying areas, audience members recognized lyrics and dance steps and entered the performance space.

Conclusion

Deng explains that contemporary Dinka male youth are caught between the obsolete traditional "warrior" identity and the promise of a "modern" identity that fails to materialize. Furthermore, since current economic crisis delays, if not outright eliminates the possibility of marriage since the required bridewealth is typically outside of the man's means, male youth now occupy a liminal position in the city that many find alienating and dishonorable (*The Dinka* 90). Together with the disintegrating age-set system, the Dinka youth are caught in limbo.

I have introduced the Kwoto Cultural Center as a space that mediates changing kinship structures in contemporary Sudan. In his work on contemporary Dinka in Sudan, Francis Deng explains that Dinka male youth are caught between the obsolete traditional "warrior" identity and the promise of a "modern" identity that fails to materialize. Furthermore, since current economic crisis delays, if not outright eliminates the possibility of marriage since the required bridewealth is typically outside the man's

means, male youth now occupy a liminal position in the city that many find alienating and dishonorable (*The Dinka* 90). As a modern institution in the city of Khartoum, Kwoto functions as a nodal point for alternative community-building and identity-performance at a time of great upheaval and transition in Sudan.

I developed a reading of Kwoto's play and practices that highlights their preoccupation with the transformation of kinship in the context of relations among specific ethnic groups, among southerners and between southerners and those who are to different degrees external to the community, including the ancestors, northerners, Westerners aid workers and international donor organizations, the Arabic-speaking world, diasporic Sudnaese and transnational blacks. Kwoto's ties to transnational and international organizations and funding strengthens its credibility for some southern youth who seek to create identities that both affirm ethno-nationalist aspirations and exceed the boundaries of the nation-state.

Although I have gestured toward the possibility of multiple readings of these texts, I have chosen to focus on how Kwoto's plays function as a snapshot of the social imaginary and preoccupations of the southerner in Khartoum. The group operates within a context of layered imperialisms, which informs the multiple cultural signifiers they have at their disposal. The troupe energetically domesticates the styles, techniques and content of various cultures and multiple eras, appropriating the signifiers of indigenous southern groups, Islamic rituals, Christian rites, Western theater forms and Arabic-language genres. These multiple appropriations in effect transforms "kinlessness" from a stigma into an advantage, as the troupe creatively affiliates with multiple audiences

around the world. For Kwoto, the kinship of the audience – and the researcher as auditor is implicated – is all-important in facilitating an ideology of unity.

[1] There is a transition from literacy to orality in the sense that there is a movement from the silent reading of a novel to the interpretation of plays that are meant to be performed. However, I want to distinguish between "primary orality" and "secondary orality." Primary orality is defined by Walter Ong as "the orality of cultures untouched by literacy" (6), a situation that may no longer define any place today, but certainly does not define Kwoto's situation. Secondary orality refers to that orality that exists parallel to literacy in modern, literate cultures. According to Ong, even reading something aloud "returns it to orality," however, it is a "secondary orality" informed by literacy.

[2] According to informants, there is compulsory military service for two years after high school and before college. According to informants, this was begun in 1997. Of course, some southern men are recruited into the rebel army.

[3] Ms. Kristina Davies was the grant coordinator at Ford Foundation during this period ("Kwoto's History" 2).

[4] For more on the four official displaced camps (Mayo Farms, Jebel Awlia, Wad el Bashir and As Salaam/Jabarona), see Loveless 17 – 23). He also describes the continuities and discontinuities between the "official camps" and the shantytowns (16 – 17).

[5] Some analysts link the appearance of the legal category of the IDP to the end of the Cold War and the waning of the importance of the "refugee" as a political pawn in inter-state conflicts. See Cohen and Deng *Masses* 2; Phuong 4).

[6] Further inquiry into the Sudan Archives Durham (SAD) and the Khartoum Records Office would be necessary in any future work in order to complement the oral interviews with extant documentation of southern theater in the post-independence period.

[7] I arrived in Sudan with approximately six years of study in Modern Standard Arabic. As might be expected by those who know Arabic, I found Sudanese colloquial easier to speak than Modern Standard, and so picked up it up fairly quickly, but throughout my stay, I continually learned new vocabulary and local terminology and asked for clarification when necessary. Also, upon request, I offered regular classes in English for Kwoto members.

[8] For a history of print in southern Sudan, see Lillian Sanderson's *Education.*

[9] When I was in Khartoum in 2002, there were a few small groups usually based in NGOs or Churches who performed at Comboni Ground and other settings. I was also told that a group inspired by Kwoto, called Tutuwa (Bari for ostrich) and made up of some prior members of Kwoto, operated in the town of El Obeid.

[10] Then Dinka, estimated at two million, are widely recognized as the largest ethnic group in the south, and the Nuer are estimated at about half a million (Johnson "The South" 1). As Johnson explains, the Dinka are not one tribe but are rather comprised of "more than twenty-five tribal groups, each made up of an aggregate of political units, varying in number and size" (*Root Causes* 51). Ethnic borders between the Dinka and Nuer have been permeable historically, as have other of the pastoralist groups. This is extremely complex material. For more, see Beswick (*Sudan's Bloodmemory* 164 – 174).

[11] Dinka songs may be classified into the following categories: ox songs, 'cathartic' songs, age-set insult songs, war songs, women's songs, children's play songs, bed-time songs, hymns and schools songs (Deng Dinka and their Songs 89). Kwoto's repertoire draws on some of these categories, especially ox songs, initiation songs and war songs.

[12] Felicia MacMahon documents and analyzes these tensions in her essay on the recontextualization of ox songs (bull songs, or olé) sung by young male Didinga refugees resettled in the United States as "Lost Boys" (354; 369 – 373).
[13] Historically, this divisions has sometimes turned ideological and resulted in misperceptions and stereotypes circulating about all groups. In particular, the Bari and other agriculturalists sometimes express a bias that the Dinka and other pastoralists are "uncivilized." For more, see Beswick (Sudan's Bloodmemory 212).
[14] Anthropologist Makris spells kambala as "kampala" (*Changing Masters* 56).
[15] There are, of course, many performance traditions associated with the dominant Arabo-Islamic culture of the north of Sudan; for example, the madieh, or praise chanting for the Prophet Muhammad is the most common singing historically and the Sufi Zikr (remembrance) ceremonies are central to Sudanese Islam, and have been periodically censored and outlawed by the recent Islamist regime (Sikainga Slaves 164; Al Mubarak Mustafa 2004, 78 – 79). These traditions are not relevant to Kwoto's theater which is grounded in different histories, so I must leave them aside. A form that was tightly associated with slave descent that is only marginally relevant is the tom-tom songs that emerged in the 1930s (Malik 49 – 50). Sung with a daloka drum, tom-tom became popular at weddings and in anadi (urban social clubs).
[16] Sikainga describes how new instrumentation was introduced by returning soldiers ("Military" 30).
[17] The Catholic Church has published a booklet which is claimed to be a transcription of Bakhita's story in her own words. See Dagnino, Bakhita Tells Her Story. Historian Eve M. Troutt Powell has begun to publish some scholarly work on the subject of Bakhita and especially her role within the lives of southerners in Egypt. See, for example, her chapter "The Silence of the Slaves." It is interesting to note that Troutt Powell observes that stories told of slaves describe the imposition of an Arabic name that signifies an ironic reversal of their actual situation. For example, Bakhita is named "Bakhita" ("Fortunate") by her Arab slavers, according to accounts by Dagnino (11) and others. In this light, it is interesting to think about Mustafa Sa'eed's name, which as other scholars have noted, means "Chosen and Happy."
[18] Other southern students include Chol Deng Yong, Attanasuis Ojidio, Majori Aligana and Eva Clement.
[19] There is a array of material on the Islamization policies of the current regime. In 1989, the National Salvation Revolution Command Council used "revolutionary decrees" to institute "Salvation laws" – the 1985 Transitional Consitution was repealed, all civil and political organizations were banned, and new public order laws were established. Some public buildings were also turned into mosques. For more, see Ahmed, et al. ("The Salvation's Law and Human Rights" 55 – 89).
[20] For a list of banned plays, see Musa (*Cultural* 145 – 146).
[21] For more about the displaced camps and specifically As-Salaam, see Jeremy Loveless (21). As-Salaam is about one hour outside Omdurman by bus.
[22] Kidd and Byram, two of the founders of the Laedza Batanani, critically analyzed their efforts in a 1981 paper and concluded that the popular forms 'induced' by intellectuals led to the domestication rather than conscientization of communities (1).
[23] For general discussions of the role of improvisation in the development of African drama, see Etherton (1982), Kerr (1995). For a history of Francophone African theater, see Conteh-Morgan (1994). For monographs on specific theatrical traditions and their relationship to improvisation, see Barber (1995) and (2000), Barber et al. (1997), Cole (2001), Jeyifo (1984).
[24] Boddy (1989) defines the "hosh" as "house yard and/or the wall that encloses it" (xviii).
[25] The author, Stephen Affear Ochalla, translated it as *The Fence.*
[26] Victoria Bernal notes that the "hosh" in the northern Sudanese village where she worked had an even more permeable boundary to the outside street, with low mud walls, and brush fences, until the introduction of Islamist values which led villagers to construct new houses with "massive six-foot brick or cement walls" ("Gender" 45). Many of the houses in Khartoum, as Bernal notes, have these thicker and taller walls, but in the poorer displaced areas, they vary in height and construction.
[27] One of the directors, Elfatih Atem, chose the music. When I asked him about its significance he referred to Stevie Wonder as a personal favorite. There are implications for the significance of transnational black alliances that emerge here, but that are outside the scope of this section, but that I hope to explore in future works.

[28] "Walk dusty like this" is one translation. It could also be translated loosely as "Keep your dirty shoes" (Ochalla Personal Interview).
[29] I am translating the text from Arabic.
[30] We must contextualize these observations. From what I understand, Khartoum is a very different city in 2007, and its social and cultural life has surely changed dramatically. A return trip and further research is needed before I can make any definitive comments about the cultural life of southerners today.
[31] Clearly, the United States does not count as a "foreign ex-colonial camp" of Sudan, but one may argue that it has current, contemporary imperial interests in intervening in the country.
[32] Income is identified as the primary concern of the displaced by most NGO reports (Loveless 41), and commentators suggest that "unemployment" is a meaningless term in an environment when "employment" is so "irregular and diverse" (Loveless 42). Men, women, and children all patch together diverse jobs, including domestic work, brewing, selling cigarettes and tea, laboring, driving a donkey cart, prostitution, sewing, nursing, and others (see Loveless 42; Bekker 19 – 22). Kwoto's directors must rely on external sources since there is not yet a domestic audience able to financially support their efforts.
[33] The website has yet to be launched. http://www.kwoto.org does display that the site is optioned, but it is incomplete.
[34] For a more detailed account of Juba Arabic, see Mahmud (1983).
[35] Not all southern ethnic groups engage in scarification. For example, many Equatorian agricultural groups, like the Bari, do not scarify. Furthermore, certain northern groups do scarify, but this is outside the scope of this chapter.
[36] On the leopard-skin and the Nuer, see Douglas Johnson's *Nuer Prophets* (58).
[37] An informant explained that the Ministry of Culture and Information had become the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and that the Ministry of Information was a separate entity. In Khartoum, most entities had to register, and groups and individuals had to register for many activities. As one example, an informant told me that the Government had requested that the Church register as an NGO in 1995 – 96. Church officials believed that to register as an NGO meant that the government had the authority to control their activities, therefore they argued that they could not be defined as a non-governmental organization or corporate entity and refused to register. Also, individuals or groups like Kwoto needed to get permission from the Ministry of Interior if they were giving or hosting a lecture, since it was considered a "public gathering."
[38] According to Kenyon, a *tobe* is a woman's formal outer garment, made of a 10-meter length of fine fabric (Five 253). It has become something of a national outfit in Sudan, worn by women of various class identifications in Khartoum. It is worth noting that the Islamist government criticizes the tobe as too revealing as it is of a light and airy fabric and does not conceal the face. According Ellen Gruenbaum, Islamists say the tobe "do not adequately cover the hair, forearms and neck, and lead to public disorder. Influential Islamic scholars allied with the NIF agree that this traditional garb should be replaced by "proper Islamic dress," the *hijab*" (*The Islamist* 29).

Conclusion:

Genealogy Trouble

Our stories are gone. New stories will now begin with you. The ancient stories you were asking us about have had their turn. The time has now come for your own stories to begin. So, instead of us being the storytellers, it is now for you to be the storytellers. It is also for you to bear your children for the stories you are now about to tell.

--- Chief Arol Kacwol interviewed by Francis Deng, 1970s

The man they now called the Storyteller didn't really share the same gift as his father, but then that was what the pistol was for.

--- "Road Block" by Jamal Mahjoub, 1990s

The epigraphs above posit the ethical imperative of telling stories, but even more importantly for this dissertation, each presumes the web of kinship as an animating context for the exchanges that take place. In the introduction to this dissertation, I presented the duality of kinship – that is, kinship as simultaneously a system of support and a system of sanction – as an important framework for my analyses (Palriwala and Risseeuw 16 – 17). The epigraphs above – one spoken by a southern Sudanese leader in the context of a post-war interview in Sudan, the other taken from a fictional story written by an exiled northern Sudanese writer – hold out on the promise offered by kinship as a system of support. Feminist scholarship, and particularly feminist scholarship emanating from the first-world, has emphasized kinship as a system of sanction; in an effort to deconstruct interlocking systems of oppression and carve out new spaces for the articulation and enactment of women's agency, feminist scholars took the important step in identifying the household and the family as a site for enactment of power and control.

This strain of scholarship importantly argues that kinship is not innocent, nor should it be idealized as outside the state or other structures of governance, law and power.[1] But, in emphasizing kinship as a coercive institution, some scholars risk downplaying the importance of kinship as a "shifting network of support and care" (Palriwala and Risseeuw 21), and it is kinship as support and care that we may read in these epigraphs. With the increasing crisis of the legitimacy of the postcolonial nation-state in the twentieth century, and its failure at capturing the confidence of citizens, the sphere of kinship, even if broadly defined, becomes a refuge and social security net. Both Kacwol and Mahjoub clearly value chains of relationality and a link to "pastness" as integral to the social dimensions of identity and narrative, and relationality and reciprocity define the ethics of kinship implicit in these quotes. For Kacwol, to be detached from kin is to be deprived of a legitimate audience, and for Mahjoub, to be detached from kin is to be detached from the capacity to tell stories. Kinship's opposite in this case is killing, a situation illustrated by the tense face-off of two individual men at the "road-block" at the end of Mahjoub's story.

The texts of this dissertation are too situated on a kind of "road-block" in the sense that they span the North/South border of Sudan. To get a sense of the multiple audiences engaged with Sudan, one only need turn to the events of 2003. It is in 2003 that Dar Fur became globally visible, complicating the reified North/South border; in 2003 the Subcommittee on Africa of the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on International Relations held one of its scheduled hearing where they reviewed the Sudan Peace Act Report and proferred their continued support for the negotiations between the

Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement; and it was in 2003 that a number of cultural products emerged on the horizon of the mediascape of the United States.[2] First-person texts such as *Slave* (2003) by Mende Nazer, *Escape from Slavery: the true story of my ten years in captivity – and my journey to freedom in America* (2003) by Francis Bok as well as documentary films such as *Lost Boys of Sudan* (2003) produced and directed by Jon Shenk and Megan Mylan, appeared in succession, intensively and collectively producing and reproducing Sudan as a suffering political body.[3] Indeed, since 2003 all the world looks upon Sudan as it negotiates shifting borders, competing identities, and claims to power, and Sudanese authors and citizens are finding multiple ways to refashion relational ties that compete with, imitate or substitute for kinship structures. In light of the attention now paid to Sudan's historical depth and complexity, it is a case study worth considering for a better understanding of kinship, agency and identity performances in similarly structured spaces in the third world.

It is a contention of this dissertation that the reception of contemporary texts and current events from Sudan must not seek the "nation" as the sole category of analysis, but rather acknowledge the layered imperialisms that constitute and condition its history. Through the prism of layered imperialisms, the story of Mustafa Sa'eed gains new resonances, processes of arabization and Islamization are clarified and the efforts of southern Sudanese youth to perform multiple identities and to forge communal, post-national, and imperial ties may be historicized. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, in Sudanese history and political life, the fugitive (ex) slave and the displaced youth both occupy a precarious borderland in the public constitution of a unified nation, and manipulate kinship to perform identities that may compete with

ascribed national identities. In the contemporary era, the 1989 coup, prolonged war, political and economic collapse, and internal as well as external migration, have together created new conditions for the constitution of kinship.

The Performance of Genealogy

The various genealogically-troubled characters I examined carry with them traces of history that span the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial, but that are effaced by financial and educational technologies. I suggested at the end of Chapter One that the subaltern voices of the "nomad" and the "slave" were marginalized by the privileging of the secret room and library in the text. This concern with the erasure of oral memory and the subaltern voice informed my decision to pair a novel with a performance troupe in one dissertation. In bringing together the literary and the performative, I sought to sensitize us to the contemporaneousness of each form, and how they may echo each other's concerns even across cultural, class, and generic divides. Rather than view the novel as the symbol of modernity and oral performance as a retainer from the past, I suggest we allow our analysis to shed light on the commonalities as well as the differences among genres.

Reading *Season* together with plays by the directors of the Kwoto Cultural Center suggests that one area of commonality is a concern with genealogical consciousness. In his work, historian David Robinson has suggested the importance of genealogical invention to the processes of arabization and islamization in Muslim communities in Africa (27 – 59). Genealogical consciousness emphasizes social networks and the impact of the past on present performances of identity. The recent focus on, indeed fetishization

of, the exile and the migrant within postcolonial studies, has naturalized the concept of the abstract individual favored by liberal political and legal theory. By focusing exclusively on the individual, these approaches obscure the networks within which an individual operates and the social processes by which the "person" is ultimately defined. My readings in the previous chapters emphasize the construction of identity as a process that involves relationality, as indicated also by the epigraphs that frame this conclusion.

In my reading of Tayeb Salih's most famous novel, I argue that Sa'eed's identity as slave and nomad is dependent on his genealogy and is relationally-defined. In that chapter, I discuss Sa'eed's endless and cyclical wandering as both a function and a result of what I propose we call his "genealogy trouble." I argued in that chapter that the stigma of his parentage forces Sa'eed towards the disavowal of his genealogy and the ambivalent grasping of an identity as a disembodied individual. Sa'eed's status as phantom is in effect the status of his kinlessness, a status that becomes more and more attractive and normalized with the accession of the colonial state and the free market economy. Rather than approach Sa'eed as an individual, however, my analysis forces a reckoning with the layered imperialisms that predate his birth in 1898.

In the Introduction and Chapter One of this dissertation, I discussed the emergence of the slave, ex-slave and *sudani* identities beginning in the Ottoman era in Sudan. These identities emerged in the context of massive dislocation, movement and migration of peoples, and were defined and re-defined against the dominant land-owning Arab riverain cultures. In accounting for Sa'eed's kinlessness, and his silence, I also account for the narrator's appropriation of kinship as a narrative strategy by the

powerless and powerful alike. In invoking his audience of "Gentlemen" the narrator of *Season* asserts his privileged identity as speaker within a likeminded network and his voice is further magnified by the entry of Salih's novel into English and the system of world literature.

In Chapter Two, I discussed select performance traditions among ex-slaves and sudani and how some of these rituals are appropriated by contemporary southerners in plays they produce for the city stage. Unlike Sa'eed, these southerners are not slaves or descendents of slaves, but in their traumatic, and compelled movement north, they redefine their "southernness" on stage to strategically and selectively include prior histories of southern migration, including that of the ex-slave and sudani. At the same time, I point out the ways the urbanized southerner in the form of the *shamasha,* the criminal, and the corrupt official becomes a stock character who turns into a foil for the assertion of a new kind of southerner who *lives* in the north but retains the memory of the south. This southerner at least outwardly rejects the temptations of the modern city represented by the partially assimilated shamasha (as in the girl who extricates herself from the shoe shiners in *Warnish*), and equally rejects the perversion of tradition by displaced southern elders (such as the male youth in *Al-Hoosh).* This new southerner confidently assumes a cosmopolitan pan-Southern identity in place of an ethnic parochialism, and although he shuttles between "northern" and "southern" traditions, he locates the south as the source of his genealogy.

And yet the performance of identity in the contemporary era and within the context of layered imperialisms must account for a wide array of invented, borrowed and

inherited signifiers and practices. In *Season,* Tayeb Salih arguably addresses a world audience of readers and Mustafa Sa'eed performs a version of "Sudaneseness" for his British female partners and for his village neighbors; they all in effect become his audience. In Chapter Two, I argue that Kwoto's performances of "traditional" dances and plays rely on a self-conscious mixture of signifiers from diverse origins. Too, I argue that Kwoto's directors target not only local audiences of southern Sudanese, but other audiences as well, including Sudanese from all regions, Arabic-speaking audiences, African artists and citizens from other African nations, donor organizations, NGOs and westerners. It is their ability to animate multiple staged identities and facilitate multiple affiliations that enables Kwoto to aspire toward a humanistic discourse of "unity." It is also arguably the members' relegation to the status of "kinless" that affords them the space to re-imagine relational ties that compete with kinship structures.

It is no accident that kinless characters remain the nodal point for the emergence of the genealogical consciousness in these texts. As Palriwala and Risseeuw remind us, "The homeless, the kinless, the resourceless, and the unsupported are an increasing reality worldwide" (16). At the same time, requisite attention to Sudan's layered imperial contexts remind us that kinship is not simply a reconstructed, contemporary issue nor is kinlessness is a contemporary problem but always has a complex and specific history. The rhetoric and ideology of kinship point to a precolonial reality that affords us a way of imagining postcolonial ties that are either devalued by or exceed the nation-state. In an era of electronic media and transmission of texts, both the space of the novel and the space of performance allow for the circulation of identities beyond their immediate

context, and are therefore ideal vehicles for fashioning and refashioning multiple alliances across multiple forms of difference.

[1] For more on kinship and the state, see Judith Butlers collected lectures in *Antigone's Claim* (2000). As I noted in the Introduction and both Chapters, "kinship" and the "state" could not be easily separated out in many precolonial societies, so the interpenetration of these spheres is a commonplace in African studies.
[2] For more on the enactment of the Sudan Peace Act, see The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 97, No. 1 (Jan. 2003): 195 – 196.
[3] The genre has expanded in recent years. In 2006, well-known author Dave Eggers wrote a "novelistic autobiography" of Sudanese "lost boy" Valentino Achak Deng called *What is the What.*

Appendices

APPENDIX A: KWOTO PERSONNEL CHART

Kwoto Personnel Chart : 2002[1]							
Name	**Position**	**Years in Kwoto**	**Ethnicity**	**Origin**	**Current residence**	**With Whom?**	**Other Family?**
Administrative Positions							
Derik Uya Alfred	Managing Director	8 yrs	Balanda	Bussere, Western Bahr al-Ghazal	Fetihab	Lives with fiancée, father, and numerous members of family.	Most family lives with him
Stephen Affear Ochalla	Artistic Director	8	Anywak	Akobo	Fetihab	Lives with father, mother, one brother and one sister	One sister is in Ethiopia with her eight children; one sister is in Australia; one brother has disappeared. Father died during Summer 2002.
El Fatih Atem	Video and Communications	3	Dinka Bor	Bor and Zalingi, Western Sudan	Samrab	Lives with wife, mother, four sisters and two brothers	One brother is in military and lives in Gadaref; one lives in New Zealand
Sidi Moctar	Photography	3		Congo			
Nicola Francis Gon	Student Affairs	7	Balanda	Wau	Haj Yousif	Lives with wife and two sons	Father and eight brothers and sisters live in Wau
Charles Kenyera	Head Financial Officer	5	Acholi	Kitdum, Northern Uganda	Jerief Gharb	Lives with wife and children	Family is in Uganda
Philip Kitara	Finance Officer	1	Acholi	Kitdum, Northern Uganda	Khartoum East	Lives alone	Family lives in Kitdum, Uganda
Hanan Amin	Secretary; also student at Ahfad University, the only university for women in Sudan.	8	Nuba	El-Obeid	Fetihab	Lives with Derik, with whom she is engaged. Various family members live there as well.	Parents live in El-Obeid.

Kwoto Personnel Chart : 2002[1]							
Name	**Position**	**Years in Kwoto**	**Ethnicity**	**Origin**	**Current residence**	**With Whom?**	**Other Family?**
Muhammad	Computers; also student at Computer Man College, founded in 1991.	1	Arab/ Nubian (Halfa)	Wadi Halfa	Khartoum		
Edward Ladu Terso	Journalist and Editor	6	Bari	Juba	Haj Yousif, Redmia	He lives alone. He is engaged.	Mother and Sister live in Juba
Uncle Louis	Guard (retired)	4	Dinka Bor	Bor	Fetihab and on Kwoto premises	Lives with aunt and family in Fetihab	Four sons in Juba, two in Bor working with Nile transportation
Maria Gabrielle	Cook (lunches)	4	Shilluk	Fashoda	Fetihab Shigla	Lives with her daughters and sons	
Performers							
(males)							
Charles Abasha	Performer	1 month	Lokoya	Equatorial	Haj yousif	Alone with friends	
Santo Ahmad	Performer	8	Balanda / Golo	Bahr al-Ghazal	Kalikla	Lives with wife and children	
Yohannes Albino	Performer	8	Shilluk	Malakal (1975)	Haj Yousif al-shigla	Lives alone	Father, one older sister and one younger brother live in Malakal. Mother died.
Gabriel Belino	Performer	6	Golo	Wau	Kalakla wad amarah	His mother	Father died Summer 2002.
John Carlo	Performer	1 month	Latuka	Eastern Equatoria	Jabal Aulia	His brother	
Gabriel Dunato	Performer	2 years	Yulu	Bahr al-Ghazal; Khartoum	Khartoum	Sister and two brothers	Father died in 1979. Mother lives in Khartoum. One brother who is a soldier in El-Obeid
James Ewaj	Performer	8	Shilluk	Malakal (1975)	Haj Yousif Takamul	Lives with housemate Marco Nardino	One older sister and one younger sister live in Haj Yousif
Emmanuel Ekol	Performer	4	Bari	Juba	Haj yousif	A wife and a daughter	
Dominic Gregory	Performer	3	Lokoya/Latuka	Torit; Liria;	Wad Rumli;	Live with brother in Wad Rumli;	Sister lives in Jebel Aulia; Mother lives in Juba. Father died.

Kwoto Personnel Chart : 2002[1]							
Name	**Position**	**Years in Kwoto**	**Ethnicity**	**Origin**	**Current residence**	**With Whom?**	**Other Family?**
				Juba	Ombada Sebille	lives with aunt in Ombada	
George James	Performer	1 month	Andogo	Wau	Kalakla		
Beej Louis Kaul	Performer	4	Dinka Yerol	Kapoeta (1980)	Fetihab	Lives with Uncle and Aunt	
Arkangelo Mako	Performer	6	Madi	Eastern equatoria	Kober	Lives alone in apartment; works as a cook at theological school	
Marcos Nardino	Performer	3	Balanda	Wau	Haj Yousif Takamul	Lives with James Ewaj	Father and Mother and eight brothers and sisters live in Wau
Performers							
(females)							
Aliza Agaudig	Performer	2	Shilluk	Malakal (1983)	Haj Yousif Shigla	Lives with father, mother, father's second wife and 10 brothers and sisters	
Viola Gasfa	Performer	8	Zandi / Madi	Juba	Kalakla	Lives with son	Left Khartoum at end of Summer 2002 for Egypt
Nancy James	Performer	2	Acholi	Juba	Kalakla		
Amelia John	Performer	2	Shilluk	Malakal	Haj yousif	With her mother	
Suzi John	Performer	1	Kakwa	Juba	Mayo		
Lina Joseph	Performer	2	Lokoya				
Foni Laka	Performer	2	Bari	Juba	Haj Yousif and Dar es Salaam	Lives with mother, brother and 2 sisters.	Father lives in Juba and is a fireman.
Nyankwan (Angelina) Ofetch	Performer	5	Shilluk	Malakal	Haj Yousif Shigla	Lives with mother and father, brothers and sister	
Suzan Pasquale	Performer	1	Avokaya	Juba	Wad Hasan	Lives with mother, father, 7 sisters and 3 brothers	
Anita Patris	Performer	8	Latuka	Torit	Haj Yousif	Lives with	

Kwoto Personnel Chart : 2002[1]							
Name	**Position**	**Years in Kwoto**	**Ethnicity**	**Origin**	**Current residence**	**With Whom?**	**Other Family?**
						mother	
Omjima Philip	Performer	7	Latuka	Torit; born in Fetihap	Fetihap	Lives with mother, siblings, boyfriend and son	Father died in 1993.

[1] I gathered the bulk of the information presented in this chart during my Summer 2002 four-month stay in Khartoum. After drawing up the categories listed in the columns approximately two weeks after my arrival, I began to approach individuals in Kwoto and posed each question directly (residence, family, origin, etc.). Each individual was notified prior to my arrival, but reminded during our conversations, that the information would be published as part of my research. The category of "ethnicity" derived from my own research interests on changing kinship structures and modes of affiliation, but also accord with current modes of self-identification in Khartoum and Sudan, as well as within Kwoto specifically. "Ethnicity" in Sudan is often articulated in terms of "tribal" affiliation, or *gabila* as discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation. I witnessed Kwoto performances for displaced audiences that ended with the Artistic Director's identification of each performer's ethnic affiliation as that individual took a bow. Kwoto's own organizational documents, produced with funding agencies in mind, also included ethnic identification for each performer (it is interesting to note, too, that Kwoto's official documents listed marital status for each individual) Besides speaking with each individual informally and sometimes briefly, I also conducted more in-depth formal interviews with three of the Directors and six performers, and it was during these interviews that the complexity of ethnic identification was articulated. One informant claimed that ethnic (or "tribal" – gabila) affiliation was so primary that southerners (or "janoubiin") had nothing in common, whereas other informants preferred to identify as part of a pan-Southern community, and claimed that Kwoto was for "Southerners." The complexity of the responses during these longer interviews, as well as observation over my time in Khartoum, forces me to recognize that the nature of my question on ethnic (gabila) identification may have limited the responses I received and in fact conditioned those responses (that is, some respondents may have felt forced to simplify their ethnic identifications or offer an ethnicity when ethnic identification was not primary to their identity).

Although most of the information here was gathered during my stay, some details were missing that I only discovered upon my arrival back in the United States. I am grateful especially to Derik Uya Alfred and Elfatih Atem for communicating with me over email and providing me with essential information in the months after my departure. Still, I alone am responsible for the information presented here.

APPENDIX B: KWOTO PLAYS

Kwoto Plays : 1994 - 2002			
Title		**Brief Description**	**Languages**
1	"African Family"	A play about reproductive health staged for development initiatives. Recommends family planning.	Simplified Arabic
2	AIDS	A play that educates audiences about potential causes of the HIV virus, and recommends prevention. Story focuses on sexual intercourse and the dangers of shared razors and traditional tattooing and scarification.	Arabi Juba (Pidgin Arabic) and local languages
3	Chelo "He is not there"	A young man desires to leave his village to go to Khartoum. He convinces his father, who must sell his best cows to raise enough money for his son's trip. When the war reaches the village, the father too runs to Khartoum and searches for his son. The father finally locates him, but the son denies knowing who he is. The father dies from shock and despair.	Pidgin Arabic and Nuer
4	The Fish	A morality tale about collectivity, ethnonationalism and equal distribution of wealth. A group of people jointly capture a big fish but argue over how to divide it. Each group wants to divide it on a tribal basis, and at the end	Mixed languages: Bari, Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Pidgin Arabic

		the groups are at war with one another over the fish.	
5	Galak Galwack Galwak "Puzzlement"	This play is based on a mythological tale. A mythological animal kidnaps, rapes and kills the beautiful girls of the village. The villagers gather to see how they will stop and kill the animal. Mr. Galwak, a stubborn elder, is against all the proposed solutions, especially those offered by the youth. The play dramatizes generational tensions.	Pidgin Arabic
6	Gamara Tala "Moon has Risen"	The moon has disappeared and the play features the collective search for the moon. In the course of searching, villagers discover many of their rights: the right to life, to culture, and to association, which have been denied them by their oppressors.	Pidgin Arabic and indigenous languages
7	Geragir "Mudfish"	An adaptation of Jean Genet's *Les Nègres (1957/1959) (The Blacks)* set in urban Khartoum.	Colloquial Arabic
8	Gidadat "Chickens"	Under shari'a law, brewing alcohol is forbidden, however the demand for it persists in Khartoum. This play protests the imprisonment and mistreatment of displaced women who make their living brewing and selling alcohol.	Pidgin Arabic
9	Haj Yousif	Two different displaced families, one from Juba and the other from Malakal, arrive in Khartoum for the first time not knowing the city or the language. All	Pidgin Arabic and local languages

		they know is the name of the place "Haj Yousif" and the improvisation follows the miscommunications that ensue.	
10	Al Hoosh "The Courtyard"	Explores the problem of adequate housing for the war-displaced. The play also becomes a commentary on the effects of war and displacement on gender, ethnic and family identities and peoples' social and psychological well-being	Pidgin Arabic
11	Jaborona "Displaced Area"	An improvisation dealing with the disputes, bribery and bias plaguing questions of residence and the distribution of land for displaced peoples.	Pidgin Arabic and local languages
12	Jal Dowang Ajak "An Elder"	A play that explores the importance of retaining tradition. An elder advises his children to follow traditions, but they dismiss his message. As he dies, they realize he was right.	Pidgin Arabic and Shilluk
13	Kwoto	A King tells his subjects that the earth is fragile, and they must not walk, but crawl, on its surface. Only the King and his inner circle may walk on the earth. A brave man enlightens his people as to the strength of the earth, and his is subsequently murdered by the King.	Pidgin Arabic and mixed languages
14	Lopijut "Nightmare"	A play about one man whose nightmare features an array of oppressive situations facing displaced peoples.	Pidgin Arabic and Bari
15	Malaria	A play staged for development initiatives which teaches audiences	Simplified and pidgin Arabic

		modern methods for avoiding mosquitos and preventing malaria.	
16	Al Mara Al Naziha "The Displaced Woman"	Two women originating from the same village meet in Khartoum. One is "modern," having been in Khartoum for years. The other is "fara," or rural, and is manipulated by the urbanized woman. The play comments on the cruel treatment of the newly displaced by urbanized southerners.	Pidgin Arabic and Shilluk
17	Marhoum Alif "The Deceased X"	After his death, an Engineer finds himself trapped among those – also dead - displaced by his oil development program.	Simplified Arabic
18	Nyginda	A story based on a traditional tale. A beautiful girl meets three gentlemen who fight to win her love and end up killing each other.	Pidgin Arabic and Shilluk
19	Rimpee "The Wilderness"	The play launches a severe critique of official authority by analogizing police and governmental leaders with gangs and criminals.	Pidgin Arabic and Balanda-viri
20	Shamasha "Street-boys"	Stages the world of the "street-boys," living in gangs, eating from the garbage, taking drugs, and sleeping in streets.	Simplified Arabic
21	The Snake	While two young men are cultivating the land, a snake enters the pocket of one. The snake manipulates the two men, blackmails one, and ultimately divides them.	Pidgin Arabic and Nuer
22	Warnish "Shoe-shiners"	Enters the real and fantasy worlds of youth who spend their days on the streets	Simplified Arabic

		shining shoes.	
23	Qadayah zhol al-Himar "The Case of the Donkey's Shadow"	Adaptation of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's radio play *Der Prozeß um des Esels Schatten (1952) ("The Case of the Donkey's Shadow").* Addresses the worlds of war and peace.	Simplified and Pidgin Arabic

APPENDIX C: KWOTO SONGS AND DANCES

Kwoto Songs and Dances : 1994 - 2002		
Song / Dance Name	**Origin of Song**	**Description or Lyrics**
Abu Gour	Bahr al Ghazal	"Ado" where men beat the ground with both feet in rhythmic beat foot after foot
Adingding	Acholi; Equatoria	A women's dance
Ayaya	Anywak; Upper Nile	A love song
Baai	Dinka from Bahr al Ghazal	"Oh my land, you have been raped"
Barende	Madi; Nomile, Equatoria	"Let us stand together"; "Please unite"
Boji Boja	Kuku; Eastern Equatoria	"Dance, beautiful dance. They compel me to dance to a bad musical beat. They force me to eat groundnuts by the mouthful"
The dream	Modern composition by Sharief Sharhabil Ahmed	Kwoto directors choreographed dance to this piece of music.
Elko Madi	Madi; Equatoria	"I will fight bravely"
Garang	Dinka; Bahr al Ghazal	A man praises his bulls
Golo Gurdang	Nuba Mountains; Southern Kordofan	A love song
Ja Pouwa	Anywak; Upper Nile State	"Oh my people, we lost our fellow
Jayou Khorosungo	Anywak; Upper Nile State	"Let us unite to fight the enemy"
Kambala	Nuba	Cattle dance
Kosh Kor	Nuer; Upper Nile State	"I want a beautiful girl"
Kwot	Shilluk; Upper Nile State	Warrior dance; Shields are incorporated into a dance that stages a fight against an enemy
Kwoto Sossa	Modern composition	Emblem of group. Sung as a salute to audience in the beginning of each show
Lowake	Dinka Bor; Upper Nile State	Praise for bull, the emblem of wealth for the Dinka
Luyele	Acholi; Equatoria	

Nan Lomin	Bari; Juba, Equatoria State	"I am small, I am weak, don't destroy me"
Nashalla	Lokoya; Eastern Equatoria	Song/dance for youth
Ngo ka ta sol yo	Balanda; Bahr al-Ghazal State	"Don't be deceived by the enemy"
Nyakang	Shilluk	Song for the Shilluk King
Uchol Uchol	Shilluk; Upper Nile State	Requesting loyalty from community; sell-outs are outcasts
U'tadu	Kwalib; Nuba Mountains	Song accompanied by a dance (Kirang) where a person beats the ground with one foot
U'te rage	Latuka; Eastern Equatoria State	A love song
Wilwil	Nuer; Upper Nile State	Praises heroism
Wo Kanga	Balanda-Viri; Western Bahr al-Ghazal State	A lament to commemorate the death of a loved one
Won Abo	Acholi; Nimuli, Equatoria State	The cry of the Abo people"

APPENDIX D: FIGURES

Figure 1: Bus for Kwoto shows

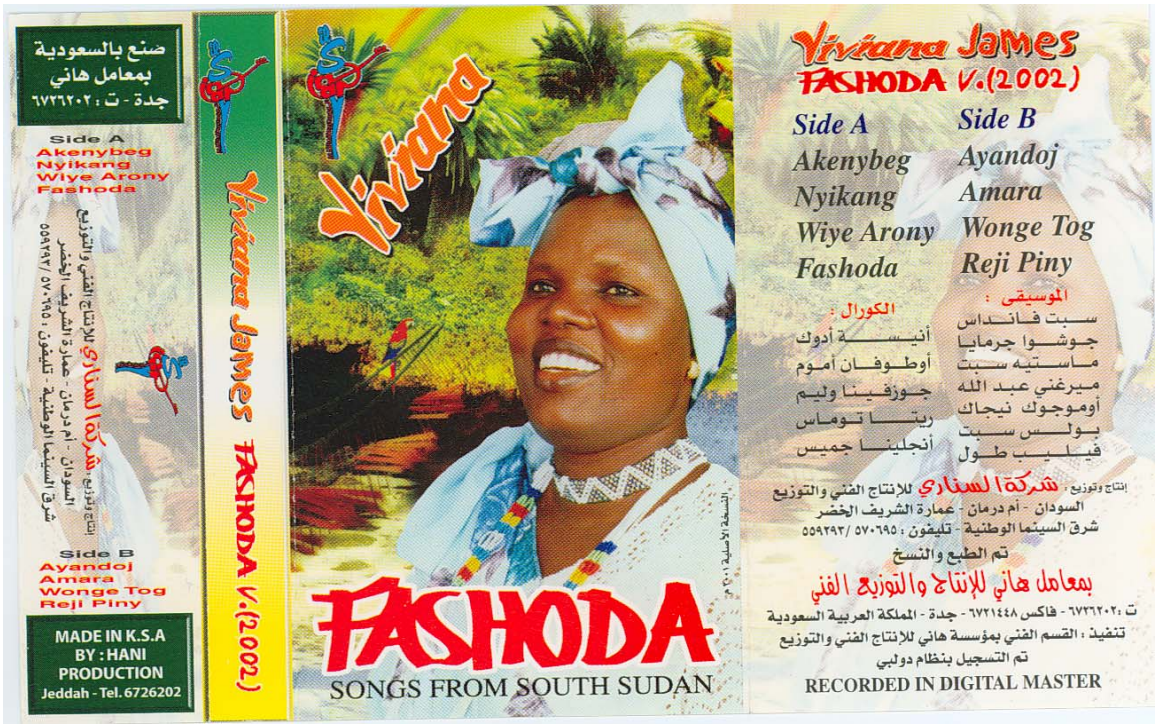

Figure 2: Jacket from Tape of Vivana James' album "Fashoda"

Figure 3: Kwoto's rendition of the "Kambala"

Figure 4: Kwoto's rendition of the "Kambala"

Figure 5: Kwoto's "Kujur" Dance

Figure 6: Kwoto's "Kujur" Dance

Figure 7: Kwoto Cultural Center insignia

Figure 8: Performance of *Al-Hoosh.* Portrait of Bakhita appears on the actress' wrap skirt

Figure 9: Portrait of Bakhita appears on actor's armband

Figure 10: Water Carrier walking through audience in *Al Hoosh*

Figure 11: Drunk elder in *Al Hoosh*

Figure 12: Al Azaba and Drunk Elder monopolize the young man's angareb (note actors behind stage)

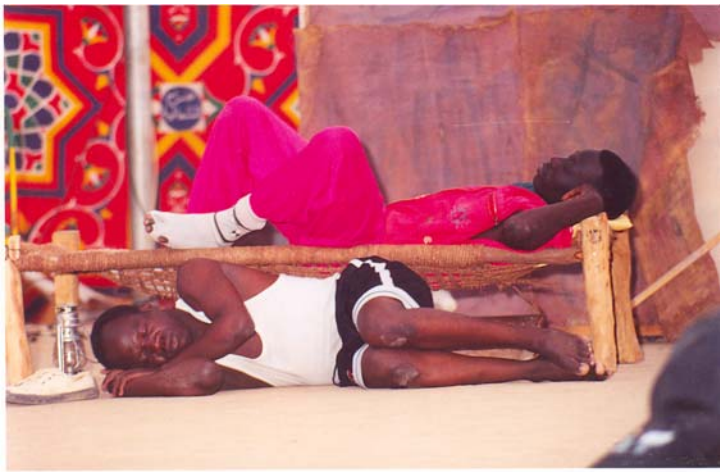

Figure 13: *Al Hoosh* performed at Comboni Ground

Figure 14: The Deceased in *Marhoum Alif* walking around their graves.

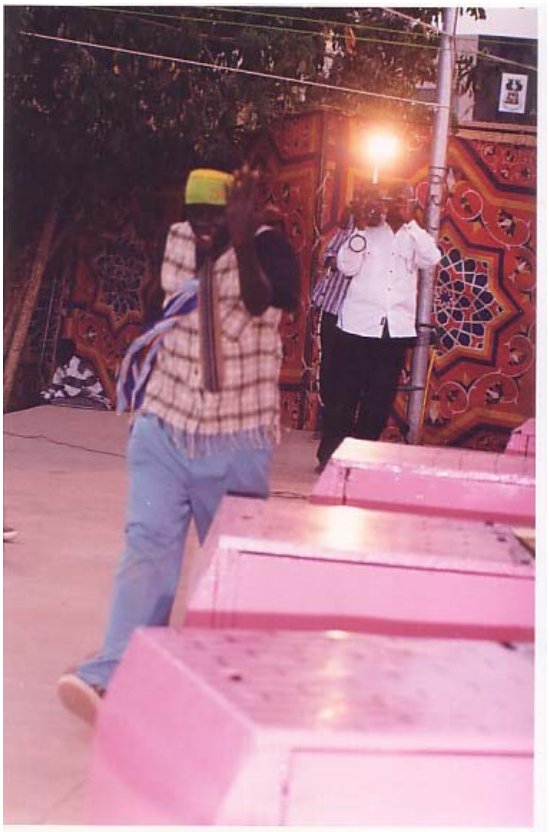

Figure 15: Engineer raving madly.

Note Kwoto director behind him videotaping performance

Figure 16: Engineer with military hats piled on his head

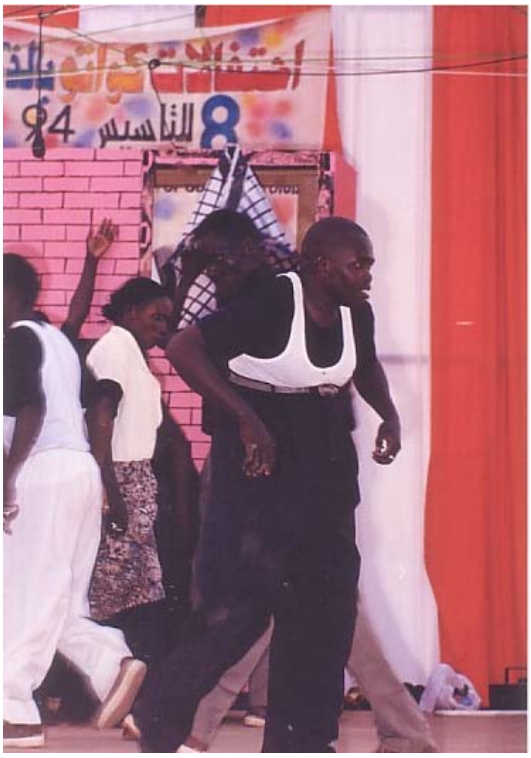

Figure 17: Elder walking from window to window

Figure 18: Woman in blue and white *tobe* gets up and joins dance

Figure 19: Woman with flower *tobe* gets up and joins dance

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<u>Kwoto Plays</u> (also see Appendix B)

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Al-Hoosh. (*The Fence; The Compound; The Courtyard*) by Stephen Affear Ochalla.

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Qadayah Zhol A-Himar (2001) (*The Case of the Donkey's Shadow*) by Derik Uya Alfred. (An adaptation and Sudanization of *The Case of the Donkey's Shadow* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt)

Warnish (*Shoe Shine*) (1999) by Stephen Affear Ochalla

<u>Interviews</u>

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Rebecca Lorins was born in Yonkers, New York on April 6th 1970 to Robert Sanford Lorins and Bonnie Ellen Lorins. She graduated from Ramapo Senior High School in Spring Valley, New York in 1988 and began her undergraduate studies at Oberlin College in Oberlin Ohio. Rebecca spent 1991 in Paris, France, and graduated with a B.A. in literature from Oberlin in May 1992. She returned to her home state of New York, enrolled in evening classes in Arabic, and worked as a substitute teacher, a volunteer at a youth center, and in documentary film and video production and distribution. She entered the Program in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin in the fall of 1995. During her tenure as a graduate student, she was a Teaching Assistant or Instructor for courses in World Literature, British Literature, American Literature, Postcolonial Literature, African Literature, Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, Writing and Globalization, and Rhetoric of Gender and War. She won fellowships to study Arabic in Morocco and at the Middlebury Language School, and Somali at the Summer Consortium for African Languages. She was awarded an AAUW dissertation grant as well as a dissertation fellowship for travel and research in Sudan in 2002.

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